

A Practical Study of

GALATIANS: You Were Running Well

"Freedom vs. Legalism: The Truth Shall Set You Free"

Study #7 – Galatians 4:1-11

UNTIL: You Didn't Graduate

Key Verse: Galatians 4:5-6

in order that he might deliver out by the payment of a ransom those under law, in order that we might receive the adoption. Now because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his son into our hearts crying Abba, Father.

TEXT:

v. 1 Now I am saying as long as the heir is a child he is no different than a slave though being legally owner of all.

v. 2 But is under Guardians and stewards until the previously appointed time of the father.

v. 3 So also we when we were children we were in a permanent state of servitude under the rudiments of the world.

v. 4 But when the fullness of the time came. God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under law

v. 5 in order that he might deliver out by the payment of a ransom those under law, in order that we might receive the adoption.

v. 6 Now because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his son into our hearts crying Abba, Father.

v. 7 So that no longer are you a slave but a son, now if (you are) a son, (you are) also an heir through God.

v. 8 But at that time, (in fact) not knowing God you were enslaved to those which by nature are not being gods.

v. 9 But now having come to know God, indeed rather having become known by God, How are you turning back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments to which you are willing to be enslaved again.

v. 10 Days you are scrupulously (religiously) observing and months and seasons and years.

v. 11 I am afraid about you lest perhaps in vain I have laboured to the point of exhaustion for you.

INTRODUCTION:

(Cowgirl Poetry: One Hundred Years of Ridin' and Rhymin' edited by Virginia Bennett) Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs-Smith. Copyright – Virginia Bennett, 2001.

HEAVEN'S BRANDING

Janet Parkhurst

Cody, Nebraska – 1995

I dreamed one night I stood before the pearly gates.
Would I know my loved ones there? Some debate.
St. Peter was my guide as we toured this holy place.
I longed to see them all and searched each peaceful face.

We saw a crew of cowboys roundin' up the heavenly herd.
One rode out ahead, his horse he gently spurred.
He sat tall in the saddle, I could tell he was respected.
The cattle corralled quite easily, as calmly he directed.

My Dad was riding there.

The cattle were quickly sorted; runaway calves were roped.
I searched the faces for others I knew, it was as I had hoped.
He stood with others gathered round, the story that he told
Had brought laughter to each face as his tale did unfold.

My husband was laughing there.

The branding fire was started, each cowboy took his place.
The work was done methodically, it portrayed a kind of grace.
From the back of a pickup two little cowpokes were takin' it all in.
I heard the deepest laugh from one; I just had to grin.

My son was watching there.

Heelers, wrestlers, branders, they all did their job with ease.
Work turned to pleasure, that's what it was for these.
A little girl rode up, blonde hair blowin' in the wind.
Sparklin' eyes lit up as though she'd seen a long-lost friend.

My daughter was smiling there.

The work was soon completed, to the big ranch house they rode.
A feast was waiting there, complete with pie a la mode.
A genteel woman rang the bell and hollered “come ‘n’ dine.”
She welcomed each one with a smile as they formed a dinner line.

My Mom was serving there.

Everyone was seated and bowed their heads to pray,
Thankful for their heavenly surroundings and the outcome of the day.
A presence filled the room, peace and love was all around.
He stood with hands outstretched; on His head a golden crown.

My lord was waiting there.

pp. 37-39

(Write ‘Em Roughshod: Life ‘N Such Like by Peggy Godfrey) Crestone, CO:
MediaChaos. Copyright – Peggy Godfrey, 1994.

A CLEAR DEFINITION

When David, my older son, was a toddler, he showed little interest in being potty-trained. To lure him into socially acceptable behavior I tried games, bribes, and threats. Finally M&Ms won his attention and potty training began in earnest. He received one M&M for trying, two M&Ms for success, with the promise of his own small bag of M&Ms when several days in a row confirmed his progress from diapers to training pants.

We were both pleased when he earned his bag of M&Ms. Nothing prepared me for the touching gift I received: he tore open his bag of candy, poured it all out on the table, and divided the candies into two equal piles. When he completed the sorting, he looked up happily and said, “These are for you, Mom.”

I was surprised—and assured him that they were all for him. He said, “I KNOW, but I’m *giving* these to you.”

My Heavenly Father touched a deep place within my spirit. I know the Scripture, “God loves a cheerful giver.” It never occurred to me that He meant THAT cheerful. When I respond to obligations and a sense of duty, I search myself for that childlike joy I found in my son—wholehearted generous joy.

p. 37

The Potty

It is so unusual to get a funny, non-political, non-sexist, non-racist, and non-doomsday message that I wanted to make your day by sending it along! I know you'll enjoy it.

A little three-year-old boy is sitting on the toilet. His mother thinks he has been in there too long, so she goes in to see what's up. The little boy is sitting on the toilet reading a book. But about every 15 seconds or so, he puts the book down, grips onto the toilet seat with his left hand and hits himself on top of the head with his hand.

His mother says: "Billy, are you all right? You've been in here for a while."

Billy says: "I'm fine, mommy. I just haven't gone potty yet."

Mother says: "Ok, you can stay here a few more minutes. But, Billy, why are you hitting yourself on the head?"



Billy says:
"Works for ketchup."

(Received via email from Elwood McElveen, December 8, 2010)

Mom Helps Disabled Son Graduate

When Sumner Spence expressed his desire to attend college, many people scoffed because he suffers from cerebral palsy. Sumner can't read books because his eyes won't focus. He can't hold onto things very well because his hands clench uncontrollably. Taking notes in a classroom would be out of the question. Anyone who knew Sumner would have thought it perfectly understandable if he had never set a goal beyond learning how to operate his wheelchair. But that wasn't good enough for Sumner. And it certainly wasn't good enough for his mother, Susan Spence.

Despite the seemingly insurmountable odds, Sumner Spence enrolled at the University of Delaware. His mother attended all his classes, faithfully taking his notes for him. Each evening she would enter the lecture notes into a special computer program whose digital voice read the notes back to Sumner as he studied. Over the course of 2½ years, Susan Spence scanned more than 5,000 pages of textbook material and edited the scanned text for accuracy so Sumner could effectively study. One particular class assignment called for Sumner's mother to go the extra mile. The students were asked to read Liam Callanan's first novel *The Cloud Atlas*. The famous author was going to be a special guest lecturer on the campus. Sumner's mom was not aware an electronic version of the novel existed, so she re-typed the entire book into their home computer.

When the class hosted an informal lunch to chat about Callanan's book, Sumner offered a number of insightful observations and questions. Later that evening, Callanan received a phone call from the professor of the class. Sumner's mom had just spoken with the professor, tearfully telling her how before that meal Sumner had never eaten in public with anyone other than a family member. He was always afraid he would repulse people who didn't understand. Since he loved reading, though, he wanted to talk about books, and the lunch that day had given him the opportunity.

On the evening of May 24, 2007, Susan Spence took a seat in the back of the auditorium, and she watched as Sumner wheeled himself across the platform to receive his Associate of Arts degree. After addressing his fellow graduates at the commencement ceremony, more than 300 students and family members in attendance erupted in a standing ovation for this determined boy and his loyal mother.

Craig Priestley, La Grange, Illinois, and Clark Cothorn, Ypsilanti, Michigan; sources: Morning Edition, National Public Radio (5-24-07) and Martin Mbugua (with assistance from Sharon Dorr), "Tearful gratitude by graduate who triumphed over disability," www.udel.edu (5-26-07)

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The Lord Jesus tells the story of the two sons in:

Luke 15:11-24 (NASB)

And He said, "A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' And he divided his wealth between them. And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be in need. And he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men."' And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' And they began to be merry.

The one son wanted to take his inheritance that would become his when his father died and go live independent of the father in the far country.

The **PRODIGAL SON** wanted to forget his position as a son of the father. He wanted all that he was going to get on his inheritance so that he could live independent of his father. While he was squandering his goods in a far country, he finally came to his senses and remembered his father. He thought he would go home and be a slave of his father because he had lost his right of sonship due to his disobedience. He is totally surprised when he returns to find that his father is waiting for him and he is instantaneously restored to his position as son in the family. There is a great feasting and rejoicing upon the part of the father and the friends because the son has come home.

Perhaps this study finds you in a far country wanting to forget your sonship to the heavenly Father, and your thinking has been tainted by the fact that because of your selfishness and failure, now all you can expect is to be a slave.

There is a real danger in forgetting our position as sons of God, and to squander all that He has given us on ourselves and for our good. It is not until we are brought low to recognize that we have a need we cannot meet ourselves. It is then that we come to our senses in the midst of our spiritual poverty and return to Christ. Satan would have us forget our position, to live according to the dictates of our hearts, to follow the allurements of the flesh and the world father than to remember our position as sons and to follow our Father's leading.

In our study of the **BOOK OF GALATIANS** we are finding that our **KEY VERSE** is:

Galatians 5:7

You were running well; who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth.

The plea of the **BOOK OF GALATIANS** is to recognize the contrast between:

FREEDOM vs. LEGALISM.

And also to remember:

THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE.

As we pursued the series:

1. You Were Running Well UNTIL: No Runs, No Hits, and a Big Error (Galatians 1:1-9)—The Galatian Christian Christians had a troubled mind and a twisted gospel.
2. You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Forgot What God Was Doing in Your Life (Galatians 1:10-24)—Paul recounts the tremendous change that took place in his life on the road to Damascus when he met Jesus Christ, face-to-face.
3. You Were Running Well UNTIL: Divine Direction Was Not Discerned (Galatians 2:1-10)—Paul recounts the journey that he and Barnabas and Titus took to the Jerusalem counsel to receive the affirmation for the Gospel that they were preaching to the gentiles.
4. You Were Running Well UNTIL: Peer Pressure Postponed Progress (Galatians 2:11-21)—The pressure upon Peter to add legalism to his repertoire even after the Jerusalem counsel made a big mistake in his visit to Antioch and influenced many others in the process.
5. You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Said, I Do It Myself (Galatians 3:1-14)—Our key verse in this study was verse 3: “Are you so foolish, having begun in the Spirit now are you being brought to maturity in the flesh?”
6. You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Failed to Read the Instructions (Galatians 3:15-29)—Our key verse was verse 19: “Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made, having been arranged (ordained) through angels, by the hand of a mediator.”

We come now to:

7. You were running well UNTIL: You Didn't Graduate (Galatians 4:1-11)—Our key verses will be verses 5 & 6: “in order that he might deliver out by the payment of a ransom those under law, in order that we might receive the adoption. Now because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his son into our hearts crying Abba, Father.”

In May 1990 I had the privilege of graduating from my Doctors of Ministry program. It was a long, hard road over those four years trying to work this additional discipline into an already heavy schedule. All of the study, reading, work, and interaction were designed to come to culmination on graduation day. That day was May 26, 1990.

I do not remember any thoughts of wanting to stay on at Talbot and continue taking more classes going through my head on this occasion.

I did not feel any longing in my heart to want to have another 3,000 page reading assignment or another dissertation or another 8-hour day in a classroom.

All my joy was centered in putting that behind me and enjoying the fruit of my labor in this new position.

These Galatian Christians were turning back instead of pressing on. They are wanting to reverse the wheels and return from **SONSHIP** to **SLAVERY**.

Anders quotes Chuck Swindoll:

“It is doubtful if there is any greater joy on earth than the joy of being free. And the ecstasy is heightened if a person has once been in bondage, held captive by a power that is impossible to overcome. Being liberated from such clutches brings pleasure beyond description.”

Charles Swindoll

p. 48

Anders says:

In chapter 4, Paul explains the glorious reality of what it means to be God’s children and how awful it would be to forfeit such a privilege. Thus he warns his readers not to listen to the false teachers seducing them away from Christ and back into slavery to the law rather than freedom in Christ.

p. 48

Kay Arthur says:

**YOU’RE AN HEIR OF GRACE . . .
LIVE LIKE IT!**

p. 33

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

Paul gives his final contrast between God’s people before Christ’s coming and the position they enjoy now. The difference between these verses and 3:23-29 is in emphasis. Paul has been stressing the temporal nature of the change. At this point he dwells on their status, moving from being slaves to becoming sons and daughters of their heavenly Father. This development flows from the thought of the pedagogue in vv. 23-29.

p. 728

Bickel & Jantz say:

What's Ahead

- Christ Came to Buy Our Freedom (4:1-7)
- Don't Become Slaves Again (4:8-11)

p. 85

Anders tells the following story:

The Cookie Thief

Amazing things can happen when you are “not on the same page” with someone else. Chuck Swindoll in his book *Simple Faith* tells the story of a traveler who, between flights at an airport, bought a small package of cookies. She then sat down in the busy snack shop to glance over the newspaper. As she read her paper, she became aware of a rustling noise. Peeking above the newsprint, she was shocked to see a well-dressed gentleman sitting across from her, helping himself to her cookies. Half-angry and half-embarrassed, she reached over and gently slid the package closer to her as she took one out and began to munch on it.

A minute or so passed before she heard more rustling. The man had gotten another cookie! By now there was only one left in the package. She was flabbergasted; but she didn't want to make a scene, so she said nothing. Finally, as if to add insult to injury, the man broke the remaining cookie in half, pushed one piece across the table toward her with a frown, gulped down his half, and left without even saying thank you. She sat there dumbfounded.

Some time later, when her flight was announced, the woman opened her handbag to get her ticket. To her shock, she discovered in her purse her package of unopened cookies. Somewhere in that same airport another traveler tried to figure out how that strange woman could have been so forward and insensitive.

That man and woman were “not on the same page,” so there was total confusion and chaos. In the first-century church, the Judaizers had invented their own edition of the gospel by combining grace and legalism. Things were falling apart spiritually because they were “not on the same page” with God. By combining grace with Old Testament law, the Judaizers were producing a dangerous hybrid of Christianity, another gospel that, was, in fact, no gospel.

p. 49

De Haan says:

THE churches of Galatia, founded during Paul's first missionary journey, had been thrown into confusion by the teachings of certain legalistic bigots who told these Gentile converts that they had to become Jewish proselytes by being circumcised and submitting themselves to the Law of Moses, with its rituals, ordinances and its curse. Failing to do so would forfeit their salvation. Paul's letter to the Galatians was written to counteract this error, and to prove that both Jew and Gentile are today saved by grace through faith without the works of the law, and are kept by grace, as well.
p. 137

Lange says:

This section depends on the proposition which Paul announced at the close of the preceding one, that Christians are no longer under the . . . because they are sons of God, and heirs.
p. 95

Lenski says:

When Paul says in 3:29 that by belonging to Christ the Galatians are Abraham's seed and thus heirs according to promise, one may well ask, "Were the Old Testament believers not also Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise?" In their capacity as heirs those Old Testament believers had the law of Moses; should the New Testament believers not also have it? This question is now answered in the most adequate and the most lucid way.
p. 192

Lightfoot says:

The opening verses of this chapter are an expansion of the same image. The heir in his nonage represents the state of the world before the Gospel. In drawing out the comparison, St Paul seems to include Gentiles as well as Jews under this 'tutelage,' all having more or less been subject to a system of positive ordinances, and so far gone through a disciplinary training.
p. 165

Lucado says:

God is building a family. A permanent family. Earthly families enjoy short shelf lives. Even those that sidestep divorce are eventually divided by death. God's family, however, will outlive the universe. *"When I think of the wisdom and scope of his plan I fall on my knees and pray to the Father of all the great family of God—some of them already in heaven and some down here on earth"* (Eph. 3:14-15 TLB).

Jesus even defined his family according to faith, not flesh. *"A multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, 'Look, Your mother and Your brother are outside seeking You.' But He answered them, saying, 'Who is My mother, or My brothers? . . . Whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother'"* (Mark 3:32-33, 35 NKJV).

Common belief identifies members of God's family. A common affection unites them. Paul gives this relationship rule for the church: "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love" (Rom. 12:10 NIV). The apostle plays the word-smith here, bookending the verse with fraternal-twin terms. He begins with "philostorgos" ("philos" means friendly: "storgos" means family love) and concludes with "Philadelphia" ("phileo" means tender affection: "adelphia" means brethren). An awkward but accurate translation of the verse might be "I have a friend/family devotion to each other in a friend/family sort of way." If Paul doesn't get us with the first adjective, he catches us with the second. In both he reminds us: the church is God's family.

You didn't pick me, I didn't pick you. You may not like me. I may not like you. But since God picked and likes us both, we are family.
p. 66

MacArthur says:

Continuing his basic argument that salvation is not gained by man's merit or works but solely by God's sovereign grace working through man's faith, Paul further develops the analogy of a child becoming an adult (see 3:23-26). He compares the position and privileges of a child to those of a servant, with the figures of child and servant representing life under the law and the figures of adult and son representing life in Christ.

The analogy continues to contrast man before salvation, when, whether Jew or Gentile, he is under God's law, and man after salvation, when he is in Christ. The central truths of 4:1-11 are that life under law is meant by God to be preparation for divine sonship and that trust in His grace brings realization of that sonship.
pp. 103-4

Machen says:

In the third place, by the use of various figures, Paul contrasts the former bondage with the present freedom. Gal. 3:23 to 4:7. The life under the law was a period of restraint like that of childhood, preliminary to faith in Christ. The law was intended to produce the consciousness of sin, in order that the resultant hopelessness might lead men to accept the Saviour. Vs. 23-25. But now all Christians alike, both Jews and Gentiles, are sons of God in Christ, and therefore heirs of the promise made to Abraham. Vs. 29-36. Being sons of God, with all the glorious freedom of sonship, with the Spirit crying, "Abba, Father," in the heart, how can we think of returning to the miserable bondage of an external and legalistic religion? Gal. 4:1-11.
p. 204

McGee says:

Chapter 4 continues the section of justification by faith. Here we see that there is something else that comes through faith in Christ that we could never get by the works of the Law: it gives us the *position* of sons of God. It brings us to the place of full-grown sons. When we start out in the Christian life, we are babes and we are to grow to maturation. However, God gives us the position of a full-grown son to furnish us with a *capacity* that we would not otherwise have.
p. 174

Pinnock says:

In order to prevent anyone misunderstanding his meaning, Paul rehearses the same point again, using human growth into maturity as his illustration. He wishes to compare the rights and privileges of a young child with those of a mature son. The young child, even though technically heir to a large estate, cannot receive his inheritance until he is old enough.
pp. 53-54

Wiersbe says:

Are you a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ? Then you are also an heir, and all of Christ's riches are yours (Eph. 1:3)! A child must wait until maturity to inherit the family wealth, but God's children can have His wealth now (Phil. 4:19).

Are you a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ? Then you are free! A child is in bondage and must be guarded by adults, but a grown son or daughter enjoys freedom. To live under Law is to be a slave, and God wants His children to enjoy their freedom in Christ.

Are you a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ? Then you can become like Him as you yield to the Spirit (v. 19; 2 Cor. 3:18).

Are you a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ? Then your citizenship is secure in heaven because you are a child of promise (vv. 21-31; Gen. 16). You were born free!
pp. 768-9

Wiersbe says:

One of the tragedies of legalism is that it gives the appearance of spiritual maturity when, in reality, it leads the believer back into a “second childhood” of Christian experience. The Galatian Christians, like most believers, wanted to grow and go forward for Christ, but they were going about it in the wrong way. Their experience is not too different from that of Christians today who get involved in various legalistic movements, hoping to become better Christians. Their motives may be right, but their methods are wrong.

This is the truth Paul was trying to get across to his beloved converts in Galatia. The Judaizers had bewitched them into thinking that the law would make them better Christians. Their old nature felt an attraction for the law because the law enabled them to *do* things and measure external results. As they measured themselves and their achievements, they felt a sense of accomplishment and no doubt, a little bit of pride. They thought they were going forward, when actually they were regressing.

Such people are in a situation similar to the airplane passengers who heard their pilot announce: “Our navigator has lost our position, folks, and we have been flying rather aimlessly for over an hour. That’s the bad news. But the good news is that we are making very good time.”

p. 91

Wuest says:

3. *It was given because the sinner is like a child in its minority, and can only be dealt with in a most elementary way (4:17).*

p. 112

Wuest says:

The first word is *child*, the translation of *nepios*. The Greek word is made up of two words that together mean “one that does not speak.” The word refers to an immature person, intellectually and morally. This word Paul uses to describe the person under the law. He is treated as an immature person. An adult for instance, is old enough to govern his own actions. A child must have restraints put upon him. So in the spiritual world. Israel under law was treated like a minor. The word *servant* is the next term. The Greek word here is *doulos*, speaking of a bonds slave. It is the term used of a slave in a servile condition. The minor was legally in much the same position as a slave. He could not perform any act except through his legal representative. This person was the guardian in the case of a minor, whose sanction was necessary for the validity of any contract undertaken in his behalf.
p. 113

Let's now begin to dig into the text of Galatians 4:1-11.

v. 1 Now I am saying as long as the heir is a child he is no different than a slave though being legally owner of all.

The NET Bible translates verse 1:

Now I mean that the heir, as long as he is a minor, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything.

Peterson paraphrases verse 1:

Let me show you the implications of this. As long as the heir is a minor, he has no advantage over the slave. Though legally he owns the entire inheritance,

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles chapter 4 and then says:

Illustration of the doctrine . . .

A LEGAL ILLUSTRATION (4:1-7).

4:1-2. To illustrate the spiritual immaturity of those who lived under the Mosaic Law, Paul reminded the Galatian believers of certain characteristics of an **heir** as a minor **child** (nēpios, “infant, young child”; in contrast with *huios*, “son,” in 3:7, 26). Though by birthright **he** owned **the whole estate**, nevertheless he was kept in subservience like **a slave** in that he enjoyed no freedom and could make no decisions.

Paul is continuing his argument of the before-and-after idea that we can note in the previous section. The **CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO SECTIONS** is the word **"HEIR."**

In the previous section, we noted that to be under law is to be under the guardian, and we are there until we come to Christ by faith. Now the idea here is of a child under guardians and stewards until such time as he is declared a son with all the rights and privileges attached to that position.

Here the Apostle Paul is describing the Galatian situation. They were heirs of God in that they knew Christ, but they were no different than slaves trying to observe the law. They were forgetting their position as sons and were becoming children again, going under bondage to their guardian, the law.

They were staying under the guardian, and the inheritance was theirs for the taking.

1 Corinthians 13:11 (NASB)

When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.

1 Corinthians 14:20 (NASB)

Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature.

"AS LONG AS THE HEIR IS A CHILD HE IS NO DIFFERENT THAN A SLAVE THOUGH BEING LEGALLY OWNER OF ALL."

William Barclay says:

IN the ancient world the process of growing up was much more definite than it is with us. (i) In the Jewish world, when a boy had passed his twelfth birthday, on the first Sabbath after it, the father took the boy to the Synagogue, where he became *A Son of the Law*. The father thereupon uttered a benediction, "Blessed be Thou, O God, who has taken from me the responsibility of this boy." The boy prayed a prayer in which he said, "O my God and God of my fathers! On this solemn and sacred day, which marks my passage from boyhood to manhood, I humbly raise my eyes unto Thee, and declare with sincerity and truth, that henceforth I will keep Thy commandments, and undertake and bear the responsibility of mine actions towards Thee." There was a clear dividing line in the boy's life. Almost overnight the boy became a man. . . . When a boy was an *infant* in the eyes of the law he might be in reality the owner of a vast property, but he could take no legal decisions; he was not in control of his own life; everything was done and directed for him; and, therefore, for all practical purposes he had no more freedom than if he were a slave; but when he became a man he entered into his full inheritance and into the liberty of manhood.
pp. 36-37

Anders says:

4:1-2. Paul enumerates some of the characteristics of childhood to illustrate the spiritual immaturity of living under the law. Though a child may be the **heir** of a great estate, he still lives and functions as a **slave** until a time set by his father. Legally appointed trustees make all decisions and exercise all power over the estate even though the child may be the legal owner in cases where the father has died.
p. 50

Bartlett says:

In these first three verses of chapter 4, Paul draws a comparison between the position of an heir during the years of his minority and the status of Israel under the law. Until he reached the year of his majority, the rights and privileges of the heir were held in abeyance. In fact, he was as much under authority as any of his father's slaves. The tutors referred to in the second verse were charged with watching over his person, while the governors were stewards managing his property. The father was free to appoint as many of his supervisors as he would to serve at the same time or one after another.

p. 73

Hendriksen says:

The immediate connection with the preceding paragraph is found in the word *heir(s)*, which is found both in 3:29 and 4:1. Chapter 3 ended with the significant statement, filled with comfort for both Gentile and Jew, "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, *heirs* according to promise." Hence, Paul continues: **1, 2. What I mean is this, that as long as the heir is a child he differs in no respect from a slave though he is owner of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time fixed by the father.** When a young father dies his minor child will have to wait for the inheritance until he is of age.

p. 156

Henry says:**Verses 1-7**

The apostle deals plainly with those who hearkened to the judaizing teachers.

p. 1842

Hogg & Vine say:

. . . during the period of nonage the privileges and responsibilities of the heir are in abeyance.

p. 179

Ironside says:

In that day, minor children were not recognized as their father's heirs until, when they came of age, he took them down to the forum, answering to our court-house, and there officially adopted them as his sons. From that time on they were no longer considered as minor children, but recognized as heirs. Old Testament saints, the apostle shows us, were in the position of children. New Testament saints, since the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, are acknowledged by God as His sons by adoption. The Holy Spirit Himself is the Spirit of adoption.
pp. 134-5

Luther says:

"I want to give you another illustration from everyday life," he writes to the Galatians. "As long as an heir is under age he is treated very much like a servant. He is not permitted to order his own affairs. He is kept under constant surveillance. Such discipline is good for him, otherwise he would waste his inheritance in no time. This discipline, however, is not to last forever. It is to last only until 'the time appointed of the father.'"
p. 150

MacArthur says:

The Greek word refers to a child too young to talk, a minor, spiritually and intellectually immature and not ready for the privileges and responsibilities of adulthood.
pp. 1668-9

McGee says:

The word *child* in this verse is not the same as *child* in Galatians 3:26 where it is from the Greek word *huios*, meaning "son." Here it is *nepios*, meaning a little child without full power of speech. "The heir, as long as he is a child (a little one in the family), differeth nothing from a servant."
p. 174

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

4:1, 2 Drawing upon the illustration of the “tutor” and “heirs” in 3:24-29, Paul develops the idea of what it means to be an adopted son of God. In ancient society a **child** had to wait until the proper time before he could inherit what was his. Paul uses this to explain why God delayed Jesus Christ’s coming, leaving people with His law as a guide (3:23-25).
p. 1523

Simpson says:

In the next paragraph the apostle uses still another figure to explain the place of the law. It is the figure of the minor, the child under age, who is under tutors and governors until he reaches his majority.
p. 13

(Uncommon: Finding Your Path to Significance by Tony Dungy with Nathan Whitaker) Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House. Copyright – Tony Dungy, 2009.

*Don't worry that children never listen to you;
worry that they are always watching you.*

ROBERT FULGHUM

p. 191

If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.

C. S. LEWIS

p. 197

v. 2 But is under Guardians and stewards until the previously appointed time of the father.

The NET Bible translates verse 2:

But he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.

Peterson paraphrases verse 2:

he is subject to tutors and administrators until whatever date the father has set for emancipation.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

In fact the heir as a child was under **guardians** . . . who watched over his person, **and trustees** who protected his estate. This was true until he came of age as a son, an age that varied in the Jewish, Grecian, and Roman societies. Under Roman law the age of maturity for a child was **set by his father** and involved a ceremonial donning of the *toga virilis* and his formal acknowledgement as son and heir.

The Greek word “APPOINTED TIME” is used only here in this verse in the New Testament. It is a:

TIME APPOINTED BEFORE or

TIME PREARRANGED OF THE FATHER.

Under Roman law the **TUTOR** had charge of a child until he was 14, when the **CURATOR** took charge of the child until he was 25.

The law was given for a period of rigid training to prepare us to receive the grace of God. Whereupon at the reception point of the grace of God, when we come to faith in the Lord Jesus, we are placed as sons in God’s family.

John 1:12 (NASB)

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

Romans 8:16-17 (NASB)

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

The moment of growing up was a definite one in antiquity, and it involved matters of great religious and legal importance. For instance, in Judaism a boy passed from adolescence to manhood shortly after his twelfth birthday, at which time he became “a son of the law.” In the Greek world the minor came of age at about eighteen, but there was the same emphasis on an entering into full responsibility as an adult. Roman law also had a time for the coming of age of a son, but the age when this took place does not seem to have been firmly fixed; the father apparently had discretion in setting the time of his son’s maturity. It seems likely that Paul is referring primarily to the Roman custom as he observed a child “under guardians and trustees until the time set by his father.” At that time the child was formally adopted by the father as his acknowledged son and heir and received special adult clothes.
p. 728

Dunnam says:

Paul is emphatic. Even though God has established a great “trust” for us—our justification—we are still as servants until we respond in faith to His promise. Our age of accountability, the time when the “trust” is ours to possess, is no chronological time, but that time when we are moved to say *yes*, to claim the glorious freedom that is ours in Christ Jesus.
p 79

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

until the time appointed of the father—in His eternal purposes (Eph. 1:9-11). The *Greek* is a legal term, expressing *a time defined* by law, or testamentary disposition.
p. 1269

Lenski says:

Much more important for Paul's illustration is this mention of the father. It is he who made the testament, he who designated the heir, he from whom the inheritance comes. Thus it is he who in one way or in another fixes the time when his heir is to enter upon control of the inheritance. The heir is no more of an heir after this date than he was before it as the participle used in v. 1 indicates; but after this date the heir is, indeed, no longer under anybody as he was before.
p. 194

McGee says:

"Until the time appointed of the father." What time was that? It was the time when the father recognized that his son was capable of making decisions of his own, and he brought him into the position of a full-grown son. Notice that it is the father who determined when his son reached the age of maturity. It wasn't an arbitrary law as we have in our society. It used to be that a young person became of age at twenty-one; now it's eighteen. I think that some folk are as mature at eighteen as they are at twenty-one. Also there are other folk who haven't reached maturity at sixty-five. But in Paul's day, it was the father who decided when the age of maturity was reached. Then they held a ceremony, known as the *togo virilis*, which gave him the position of a full-grown son in the family.
p. 175

v. 3 So also we when we were children we were in a permanent state of servitude under the rudiments of the world.

The NET Bible translates verse 3:

So also we, when we were minors, were enslaved under the basic forces of the world.

Peterson paraphrases verse 3:

That is the way it is with us: When we were minors, we were just like slaves ordered around by simple instructions (the tutors and administrators of this world), with no say in the conduct of our own lives.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

4:3. Paul applied the illustration in order to show the contrast between the believers' former position and what they now enjoyed. Formerly, in their state of spiritual immaturity (**when we were children**, *nēpioi*), they were like slaves. The scope of that **slavery** was described as being **under the basic principles** (*stoicheia*, "elements") **of the world**. Though often interpreted as a reference to the Mosaic Law, this view does not fit the Galatians, most of whom were Gentile pagans before conversion and were never under the Law. It seems better to understand the "basic principles" to refer to the elementary stages of religious experience, whether of Jews under the Law or Gentiles in bondage to heathen religions (cf. "weak and miserable principles" in v. 9, and "basic principles of this world" in Col. 2:20) Thus all were enslaved until Christ came to emancipate them.

Here in verse 3 the apostle is applying what he has said in the previous two verses. He uses the word **“WE” THREE TIMES**, identifying with his readers:

1. **“SO ALSO WE WHEN,”**
2. **“WE WERE CHILDREN,”** and
3. **“WE WERE IN A PERMANENT STATE OF SERVITUDE UNDER THE RUDIMENTS OF THE WORLD.”**

Here the Apostle Paul moves from **ILLUSTRATION TO APPLICATION** in the little phrase **“SO ALSO WE.”**

What the Apostle Paul is doing is applying the illustration of what he has been talking about to us. **“WE [ONCE] WERE CHILDREN . . . UNDER THE RUDIMENTS OF THE WORLD”:**

“IN A PERMANENT STATE OF SERVITUDE” or
BONDAGE.

Paul is here speaking of the rudimentary character of the law. It was:

elementary,

the ABC's to lead to something more mature,

important and had a purpose—but we were not to stay with it or under it.

The law was to lead us on to Christ.

This takes us back to:

Galatians 3:23 (DAV)

But before faith came, under law we were being guarded, being shut up unto the faith about to be revealed.

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

The application of the illustration is obvious as Paul applies it to the inferior condition of people under law, both minors and slaves, and to the new freedom and responsibility that come to them in Christ.
p. 728

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

There has been much debate about what Paul means by this word here. Of the three major interpretations, the best one sees it as referring to the basic elements that the ancient world saw as making up the world—earth, fire, air, and water. These elements had been associated from the dawn of civilization with the gods. In Paul's time it seems that this exceedingly early view had been expanded so that the elements also referred to the sun, moon, stars, and planets— all of them associated with gods or goddesses and, because they regulated the progression of the calendar (cf. "days and months and seasons and years" in vv. 9-10), also associated with the great pagan festivals honoring the gods. In Paul's mind these gods were demons (cf. "those who by nature are not gods" in v. 8). Hence, he would be thinking of a demonic bondage in which the Galatians had indeed been held prior to the proclamation of the Gospel. . .
p. 728

Ironside says:

When He is received in faith, at the very moment of our conversion we are marked out as God's sons and heirs. This is confirmed in Rom. 8:14-17: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."

p. 135

Ironside says:

The apostle Paul identifies himself with these as a Jew and says, "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements (or principles) of the world." That is, they were under the law, and the law speaks to man in the flesh. It was given by God in order to impress upon him his duties and responsibilities. It had no power in itself to produce the new life, though it could guide the children of God and show them the path they should take through the world. It was really, however, an almost intolerable bondage to those who did not enter into the spiritual side of it. But now since the new age has come in, the age of grace, a wonderful change has been brought about.

p. 136

Luther says:

As children of the Law we were treated like servants and prisoners. We were oppressed and condemned by the Law. But the tyranny of the Law is not to last forever. It is to last only until "the time appointed of the father," until Christ came and redeemed us.

p. 150

MacArthur says:

Paul describes both Jewish and Gentile religions as elemental because they are merely human, never rising to the level of the divine. Both Jewish religion and Gentile religion centered on man-made systems of works. They were filled with laws and ceremonies to be performed in order to achieve divine acceptance. All such rudimentary elements are immature, like behaviors of children under bondage to a guardian.
p. 1669

MacArthur says:

John Wesley was an honor graduate of Oxford University, an ordained clergyman in the Church of England and orthodox in theology. He was active in practical good works, regularly visiting the inmates of prisons and workhouses in London and helping distribute food and clothing to slum children and orphans. He studied the Bible diligently and attended numerous Sunday services as well as various other services during the week. He generously gave offerings to the church and alms to the poor. He prayed and fasted and lived an exemplary moral life. He even spent several years as a missionary to American Indians in what was then the British colony of Georgia. Yet upon returning to England he confessed in his journal, "I who went to America to convert others was never myself converted to God." Later reflecting on his preconversion condition, he said, "I had even then the faith of a servant, though not that of a son."

Wesley tirelessly did everything he could to live a life acceptable to God, yet he knew something vital was missing. It was not until he went "very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street" one evening that he discovered and claimed true Christian life. "I felt my heart strangely warmed," he wrote. "I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." Things were no longer **elemental** for Wesley. He had entered "the heavenlies."
pp. 105-6

McGee says:

“Under the elements of the world” means under the law. Paul is saying that it was the childhood of the nation Israel when they were under rules and regulations.

p. 175

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

Some believe that the **elements** Paul refers to in this verse are “elemental spiritual forces.” As in astrology today, the ancients associated spiritual forces with “the elements,” such as earth, air, fire, and water. But the context, and Paul’s use of the word elsewhere (Col. 2:8, 20), favors an understanding of *elements* as “elementary principles or regulations,” perhaps the Jewish law . . .

p. 1523

Wiersbe says:

Legalism, then, is not a step toward maturity; it is a step back into childhood. The law was not God’s final revelation; it was but the preparation for that final revelation in Christ. It is important that a person know his ABCs because they are the foundation for understanding all of the language. But the man who sits in a library and recites the ABCs, instead of reading the great literature that is around him, is showing that he is immature and ignorant, not mature and wise. Under the law, the Jews were children in bondage, not sons enjoying liberty.

p. 93

Wuest says:

The word *we* refers to Christians, Gentile and Jew. *Children* is from *nepios*, the word meaning *immature*, thus, “when we were immature ones.” *Elements* is from *stoicheion*, which refers to any first thing from which the others belonging to some series or composite whole take their rise. The word refers to first principles. The word *world* is from *kosmos* and is to be understood as in John 3:16; I Corinthians 6:2, 11:32, the world of humanity. The “elements of the world” refer here therefore to the first principles of non-Christian humanity; in the case of the Jew, to the symbolic and ceremonial character of Judaism and its legal enactments, and in the case of the Gentiles, to the ceremonial and ritualistic observance of the pagan religions.

Translation. *In like manner, we also, when we were in our minority, were in a permanent state of servitude under the rudimentary first principles of mankind.*

pp. 113-14

v. 4 But when the fullness of the time came. God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under law

The NET Bible translates verse 4:

But when the appropriate time had come, God sent out his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

Peterson paraphrases verse 4:

But when the time arrived that was set by God the Father, God sent his Son, born among us of a woman, born under the conditions of the law

Whereas we had the “appointed time” back in verse 2. Now here in verse 4 we have “THE FULLNESS OF THE TIME.”

God acted in “the fullness of the time” and “sent forth his Son.” There were TWO PHRASES that followed:

1. “BORN OF A WOMAN” and
2. “BORN UNDER LAW.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

4:4. But . . . God marks the fact that divine intervention brought hope and freedom to mankind. As a human father chose the time for his child to become an adult son, so the heavenly Father chose **the time** for the coming of Christ to make provision for people's transition from bondage under Law to spiritual sonship. This "time" was when the Roman civilization had brought peace and a road system which facilitated travel; when the Grecian civilization provided a language which was adopted as the *lingua franca* of the empire; when the Jews had proclaimed monotheism and the messianic hope in the synagogues of the Mediterranean world. It was then that God **sent His Son**, the preexistent One, out of heaven and to earth on a mission. The "Son" was not only Deity; He was also humanity as the expression **born of a woman** indicates. The exclusive reference to His mother harmonizes with the doctrine of the virgin birth as taught in the Gospels (cf. Matt. 1:18). Further, Christ was **born under Law** as a Jew. He kept the Law perfectly, fulfilled it (cf. Matt. 5:17), and finally paid its curse (cf. Gal. 3:13).

Ephesians 1:10 (NASB)

with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him

John 13:1 (NASB)

Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV)

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

1 Peter 5:6 (NASB)

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

“THE FULLNESS OF THE TIME” takes us **BACK** into chapter 3 and the child under a guardian. This refers to his coming of age. It also ties into Galatians 4:2 when he is **“under Guardians and stewards.”**

“BUT WHEN THE FULLNESS OF TIME CAME, GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON” and then there are **TWO PHRASES** that conclude verse 4:

1. **“BORN OF A WOMAN”** and
2. **“BORN UNDER LAW.”**

“BORN OF A WOMAN.” This should be a reference to the **VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST** in that no father is mentioned. The Lord Jesus is miraculously conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit within the body of the **VIRGIN MARY.**

Luke 1:34-35 (NASB)

And Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.

“BORN UNDER LAW” has significance in that He was born in bondage, that He might release us from the bondage of the law. He was born a Jew of the tribe of Judah, circumcised the 8th day; yes, indeed He was born under the law that He might faithfully fulfill the requirements of the law and then die for our broken law.

Anders says:

But . . . God marks the divine answer to man's slavery under the law. When the law had accomplished its purpose and man was ready for release from the bondage of the law, **God sent his Son**. He came right on schedule, arriving on the earth **when the time had fully come**. Some suggest world conditions were ripe for the spread of the gospel.
p. 50

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

But God has set believers free! These are wonderful words, because they show that the entry of the Christian message is at the same time the turning point of history. Apart from these words, life offers no future hope for anyone. We are lost, without hope and without God (cf. Eph 2:12). But God has intervened in a way that brings an effective and complete salvation.
p. 728

Bartlett says:

Doctrinally this verse is of pivotal importance. What a world of truth is packed into a few words! It is a searchlight flashed upon the incarnation. The Christ who came was eternally pre-existent. He was God's Son. "Made of a woman" clearly points to His miraculous birth. How anyone can read this verse and maintain that Paul knew nothing of the virgin birth of our Lord is difficult to understand.
p. 74

Bartlett says further:

"Made under the law . . ." As the preceding words bring Christ into relation with the human race, these bring Him into relation with the Jewish nation. He thus took upon Himself all the general obligations imposed by God upon mankind in the law written in their hearts (Rom. 2:15), and the particular duties imposed by God upon the Jews in the law given at Sinai . . .
p. 74

Bartlett says further:

Christ came “when the fullness of the time was come.” God does nothing prematurely. He had been preparing the world for the coming of His Son. Roman rule; Greek culture, including the universal use of that language throughout the empire; and the Hebrew dispersion—all combined to facilitate the rapid spread of the gospel in the first century.
p. 75

Calvin says:

He proceeds with the comparison which he had adduced, and applies to his purpose the expression which has already occurred, “the time appointed by the Father,” but still shewing that the time which had been ordained by the providence of God was proper and seasonable. That season is the most fit, and that mode of acting is the most proper, which the providence of God directs. At what time it was expedient that the Son of God should be revealed to the world, it belonged to God alone to judge and determine. This consideration ought to restrain all curiosity. Let no man presume to be dissatisfied with the secret purpose of God, and raise a dispute why Christ did not appear sooner.
p. 118

Calvin says:

These few words contain much instruction. The Son, who was sent, must have existed before he was sent; and this proves his eternal Godhead. Christ therefore is the Son of God, sent from heaven. Yet this same person was *made of a woman*, because he assumed our nature, which shews that he has two natures.
p. 118

De Haan says:

The Cross stands between Law and Grace. Before the Cross, there was no “putting away” of sin. God pardoned the believer, suspended judgment, covered up his sin, in anticipation of the coming of the Redeemer. God pardoned the saints before Calvary upon the promise of the coming of Christ. Before Calvary there was no FULL forgiveness for the sinner, but after Calvary sin is put away. Before Calvary, the sinner was pardoned; after Calvary the sinner is justified by grace upon the full payment of the penalty of the law by the death and resurrection of Christ. Before Calvary no one could go to Heaven, but was placed in sheol, till sin should be put away (Psalm 16:9, 10). After Calvary, the believer at death goes (not to sheol) but directly into the presence of God in Heaven, absent from the body but present with the Lord.
p. 140

Dunnam says:

1. “*In the fullness of time.*” This phrase expresses a whole philosophy of history. Paul is proclaiming that God operates in sovereign freedom. The Christ-event is the supreme event of the divine plan, the end toward which God has been moving. The Christ-event is the lens through which Paul sees the salvation intentions of God. God was the beginning and the end. Behind the toiling, sweating, caring Jesus, Paul always sees God. Behind the crucified Son, he always sees God the Father. The love that reigned in the heart of the Eternal is behind the love that bled and died on the Cross. “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that . . . Christ died” (Rom. 5:8). So, too, with the risen life of Christ. To share in the life of Christ was to share with God who raised Him (cf. Rom. 8:11). The fullness of time was the fullness of God’s time to fulfill His promise to Abraham, and that fulfillment was the total Christ event.
pp. 7-80

Eadie says:

It is the time regarded as having filled up the allotted space, or itself filled up with the inflow of all the periods contained in the . . . of the father.
p. 296

Eadie says:

. . . our spiritual bondage expires with the advent of the fulness of the time—
God's set time.
p. 296

Fergusson says:

2. We are not to wonder, or curiously inquire, why Jesus Christ did come no sooner to the world, or why the church's delivery from her external bondage was so long delayed, seeing all these things were so ordered of God, and did come to pass in the full and fit time: "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son."
p. 68

Harrison says:

The great moment of human history has arrived; something very wonderful is taking place. It should command the closest attention of scientific men, for it is the turning point of destiny for the race.

Adam was "the son of God" (Lk. 3:38). But he failed as the head of the race and led it away from God into sin and death. Now God will have another Son, a Sinless One, sinlessly born of a woman, virgin-born, born of the Spirit—very God, yet very man. It is "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin" (Rom. 8:3).

God has come over to Our Side, making Himself one with us in our lot, "born subject to law," meeting Himself all its demands in life and in death, all because He wanted sons, wanted us as His sons, wanted to undo the robbery Satan committed in stealing man from Him, wanted to redeem us from being subject to law, wanted to bring us over onto His Side to live with Him as His sons.
p. 68

Hendriksen says:

. . . Christ's coming supplied the basis of freedom for man. He came, moreover, "in the fulness of the time"; that is, he arrived upon the scene of human history at the time previously fixed by the Father . . .
p. 157

Henry says:

II. He acquaints us with the much happier state under the gospel-dispensation, *v. 4-7. When the fulness of time had come he sent forth his Son, &c.* He, in pursuance of the great design he had undertaken, submitted to be *made of a woman*—there is his incarnation; and to be *made under the law*—there is his subjection. One great end of all this was *to redeem those that were under the law*. He was sent to redeem us, *that we might receive the adoption of sons*—that we might no longer be accounted as servants, but as sons grown up to maturity.
p. 1842

Hogg & Vine say:

That Messiah would come God had promised through the prophets, the time of that coming He had not declared; as in the new so in the old dispensation, 'times and seasons the Father had set within His own authority', Acts 1. 7, cp. 1 Peter 1. 11.
p. 183

Hogg & Vine say:

of a woman,—these words declare the method of the Incarnation, and attest the real humanity of the Lord Jesus; while they suggest the means whereby that humanity was made free from the taint of sin consequent upon the Fall, *viz.*, that He was not born through the natural process of ordinary generation, but was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit.
p. 184

Hogg & Vine say:

The fulfilment of this law by the Lord was the outward and evident token of His acceptance by God, and of His competence for the work He had undertaken to do.

p. 186

Ironside says:

“The fulness of the time” was, of course, the completion of the prophetic periods as given in the Old Testament. One would think particularly of the great prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel. When at last the time had arrived that Messiah was destined to appear, God fulfilled His Word by sending His Son into this scene to be born of a woman, and that woman an Israelite under law.

pp. 136-7

Ironside says:

“God sent forth His Son to be born of a woman.” He was the Son before He ever stooped from the heights of glory to the virgin’s womb. It was the Son who came in grace to become Man in order that we might be saved.

p. 137

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

The fact of God’s sending His Son to redeem us who were under the law (vs. 4), and sending the Spirit of His Son into our hearts (vs. 6), confirms the conclusion (ch 3:29) that we are “heirs according to the promise.”

p. 1269

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

God does nothing prematurely, but, foreseeing the end from the beginning, waits till all is ripe for the execution of His purpose. Had Christ come directly after the fall, the enormity and deadly fruits of sin would not have been realized fully by man, so as to feel his desperate state and need of a Saviour. Sin was fully developed. Man's inability to save himself by obedience to the law, whether that of Moses, or that of conscience, was completely manifested; all the prophecies of various ages found their common center in *this* particular time: and Providence, by various arrangements in the social and political, as well as the moral world, had fully prepared the way for the coming Redeemer.
p. 1269

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

. . . “made to be (*born*) of a woman.” The expression implies a special interposition of God in His birth as man, viz., causing Him to be conceived by the Holy Ghost.
p. 1269

Lenski says:

All we are able to say is that God knew when the proper time had arrived. Judaism was bankrupt, and paganism had always been so. We can enumerate some of the providences which helped to open the way for the gospel such as the vast extent of the Roman Empire, the spread of the Greek language, the facility of travel throughout the Empire, the spread of the Greek language, the facility of travel throughout the empire, the extensive dispersions of the Jews, its many proselytes from Gentilism, etc. All of these aided the spread of the gospel. What God saw and regarded as the fulness of the time in the spiritual condition of men, barbarian as well as Greek, is too difficult for us to predicate because his thoughts and judgments are too unsearchable for us.
pp. 197-8

Lenski says:

Then God “commissioned forth his Son.” This verb is the more vivid because it is not the usual compound with only . . . but has an added . . . This means that the Son went out on his commission not only “from” God but “out from” God.

p. 198

Lenski says:

The action of the two aorist participles is, of course, contemporaneous with the aorist “commissioned,” but what is their relation to the verb? The Greek and our two versions leave the answer to the reader. The relation is that of mode, hence participles are used which indicate subsidiary action. The son’s commission involved his getting to be (derived) from a woman and thus also getting to be under law. The second participle states what the first involves . . .

p. 198

Lightfoot says:

The ideas involved in this expression may be gathered from the context. It was ‘the fulness of time.’ *First*; In reference to the *Giver*. The moment had arrived which God had ordained from the beginning and foretold by His prophets for Messiah’s coming. This is implied in the comparison . . . *Secondly*; In reference to the *recipient*. The Gospel was withheld until the world had arrived at mature age: law had worked out its educational purpose and now was superseded.

pp. 167-8

Lovett says:

RELIGION. 20 centuries passed before the arrival of Abraham's Heir. Why so long? The world wasn't ready for Christianity, says Paul. It was not spiritually mature enough to receive its inheritance, the Holy Spirit. So, both Jews and Gentiles had to grow up in schools of religion. It was slavery. The Gentiles made gods with their own hands and slavishly served them. They sacrificed for sin, attempting to placate the wrath of their false deities. They lived under the threat of punishment. The Jews became slaves to the rituals and demands of revealed religion, which indeed dramatized the truth of God's coming sacrifice for sin. Both types of religion were somehow necessary in the historical development of mankind. The world had much to learn about sin before it would be ready for Jesus. In its spiritual infancy, all mankind had to be tutored by religious elements before Christ could come.
p. 46

Luther says:

"The fulness of the time" means when the time of the Law was fulfilled and Christ was revealed. Note how Paul explains Christ. "Christ," says he, "is the Son of God and the son of a woman. He submitted Himself under the Law to redeem us who were under the Law." In these words the Apostle explains the person and office of Christ.
p. 152

MacArthur says:

In God's timetable, when the exact religious, cultural, and political conditions demanded by His perfect plan were in place, Jesus came into the world. **God sent forth His Son.** As a father set the time for the ceremony of his son becoming of age and being released from the guardians, stewards, and tutors, so God sent His Son at the precise moment to bring all who believe out from under bondage to the law—a truth Jesus repeatedly affirmed . . .
p. 1669

MacArthur says:

... born of a woman. This emphasized Jesus' full humanity, not merely His Virgin Birth . . .
p. 1669

MacArthur says:

The source of divine sonship is the true **Son**, Jesus Christ. Just as a human father in ancient times set the time of his son's coming of age, so did **God** the Father set **the time** to send **forth His** incarnate **Son** to earth as man's Redeemer. It was in **the fulness of the time** that Jesus Christ **came**, exactly as and when the Father had established.
p. 107

MacArthur says:

The fulness of time refers to the completion of the period of preparation in God's sovereign timetable of redemption. When the law had fully accomplished its purpose of showing man his utter sinfulness and inability to live up to God's perfect standard of righteousness, God ushered in a new era of redemption. When He **sent forth His Son**, He provided the righteousness for man that man could not provide for himself.
p. 107

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

The fullness of the time is "the perfect time" in history, the "time appointed" by **God** the Father (v. 2) for **His Son** to be born, and later to die for the sins of the world.
p. 1523

Ridderbos says:

The fourth verse speaks of the end of the period of bondage designated in the foregoing. This period of time is now spoken of as *the fulness of the time*, that is to say, the moment in which the previously determined time-limit (*cf.* verse 2) was reached. Beneath this thought lies the assumption that the time runs out according to a fixed plan, that time, in short, is governed. We can ask ourselves to what extent we are also to think in this connection of a process of development taking place in time, in preparation for what would happen in the fulness of time. Now it is true that God controls time, and determines the moment of the pleroma. And this carries with it the implication that the pleroma was the most suitable for what was now about to happen.
pp. 154-5

Ridderbos says:

The words, *born of a woman*, do not refer to the beginning of his existence as Son, but as the child of a woman. The expression serves to suggest the weak, the human, the condescending. The woman was not only the medium of His coming into the flesh, but from her He took all that belongs to the human. She was in the full sense His mother. That Paul in these words is also reflecting on the virgin birth is, as we see it, highly doubtful.
p. 155

Vos says:

“But when” marks the beginning of a tremendous change in the state of affairs. “The fulness of the time” occurred when world conditions were most auspicious for the coming of Christ and at a time appointed by the Father. Perhaps at no other point in world history could Christ and the church so effectively have swept onto the human stage. Culturally the Greeks had prepared the way for the coming of Christ and the church by providing a culture and a language which were adopted by Rome and spread throughout the Mediterranean world. Greek was the lingua franca of the Empire and could be understood by those who had access to New Testament literature and preachers of the gospel.
p. 72

Vos says:

At the most opportune time “God sent forth his Son.” God took the initiative according to a divine plan. He sent His Son on the divine mission of providing salvation. The fact that He sent forth His Son demonstrates preexistence of the Son. Taking on human form so He could identify with fallen humanity, the Son was born of a woman. Born “under the law,” He perfectly kept that law, fulfilled it, and ultimately paid its curse for all mankind.

p. 73

Wiersbe says:

Christ’s birth at Bethlehem was not an accident; it was an appointment: Jesus came in “the fullness of the time.” (And it is worth noting He will come again when the time is ready.)

p. 94

Wuest says:

But when there came the fulness of the time, God sent off His Son, woman-born, made subject to law . . .

p. 206

Wuest says:

In the phrase, “the fullness of the times,” the words, “of the times” are in a construction called the objective genitive, in which the word “times” receives the action of the noun of action. The word *times*, (*chromos*), refers merely to time as conceived of as a succession of moments. The other Greek word for *time*, *kairos*, refers to the critical epoch-making periods foreordained by God. But the word Paul uses here refers merely to the lapse of time. The meaning is that when that moment came which completed the period of time designated by God that should elapse before the coming of the Son of God in incarnation, then He would send forth His Son.

p. 114

(Gatherin' Strays by Joe Kreger – 2 CD set) Tonkawa, OK: Hamilton Productions. Copyright – Joe Kreger, 2004.

His Time

We have read and we have heard,
the truths revealed in God's own word.
And from His Word this truth will ring,
there is a time for everything.

And though we're ignorant of the reason
each thing occurs in its own season.
And though we seek to wield the rod,
our times are subject unto God.

Our lives unfold within His plan,
He reigns sovereign over man.
He sets the day for each one's birth,
and guides our journey from this earth.

He has a time for us to cry,
a time to know or wonder why.
A time to strive and build and gain,
a time to leave or to remain.

There's a time to endeavor gaining ground,
and a time to lay our burdens down.
A time to struggle in the fight,
a time to travel to the light.

And now we see our prayer must be,
to live our lives expectantly.
Accepting life without regret,
within the times our God has set.
(Disc 2, Track 11)

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV)

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

v. 5 in order that he might deliver out by the payment of a ransom those under law, in order that we might receive the adoption.

The NET Bible translates verse 5:

to redeem those who were under the law, so that we may be adopted as sons with full rights.

Peterson paraphrases verse 5:

so that he might redeem those of us who have been kidnapped by the law. Thus we have been set free to experience our rightful heritage.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

4:5. The reasons “God sent His Son” are twofold (again both reasons are introduced by *hina*, “in order that”; cf. 3:14). First, He came **to redeem** (exagorasē) **those under Law**. This is not a redemption from the curse of the Law (as in 3:13), but from a slavery to the entire Mosaic system. The emphasis is not on the penalty of the Law as in 3:13, but on its bondage. Since Christ redeemed and set free those who were under the Law, why should Gentile converts now wish to be placed under it? Second, Christ’s Incarnation and death secured for believers **the full rights of sons** (“the adoption of sons,” KJV). All the enjoyments and privileges of a mature son in a family belong to those who have entered into the benefits of Christ’s redemptive work.

“God sent forth his Son” with TWO PURPOSES in mind:

1. one that involved HIM and
2. one that involved US.

These TWO PURPOSE CLAUSES are stated here in verse 5.

Here the Apostle Paul states the TWO-FOLD PURPOSE of the Son becoming human flesh and tabernacling among men.

PURPOSE #1 is seen in the very first phrase in the verse:

“IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT DELIVER OUT BY THE PAYMENT OF A RANSOM THOSE UNDER LAW.”

Now we understand why it was necessary for Him to be “born under law.”

Going back under the law is nullifying His purpose in coming.

Galatians 3:13 (DAV)

Christ delivered us by the payment of a ransom from the curse of the law. Having become a curse in behalf of us because it is written cursed is everyone who is suspended upon a tree.

Galatians 1:4 (DAV)

who gave himself in behalf of our sins so that He might rescue us out from this present evil age according to the will of our God and father.

PURPOSE #2 is seen in the last phrase of verse 5:

“IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE ADOPTION.”

We are failing to cooperate with the Father’s plan when we stay under the law after we have been redeemed.

Ephesians 1:5 (NASB)

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

Romans 8:15 (NASB)

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

One becomes a son by adoption—not that he was not already a child of the Father by relationship.

Some **ROMAN BACKGROUND** will help us here at this point:

When the father made up his mind to declare his son his legal partner and heir, the son would be taken before judges and there would be a ceremony in which the **TOGA VIRILIS** was placed on this child.

This is also made mention of back in:

Galatians 3:27 (DAV)

For as many as were baptized with Christ, put on Christ.

In this public ceremony, the one who was previously a child and had no rights of inheritance was placed into the family as having mature adult rights and therefore all the rights of sonship.

Adoption did not take someone not in the family and put him in as we think of it today. But it gave rights and privileges to one who was already a son. The child had no rights in the family until he was officially constituted a son.

When we come to know Christ as our Savior, we become children by birth; and we also become sons in that we enter into all the rights and privileges of sonship.

(Knowing God by J. I. Packer) Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
Copyright – J. I. Packer, 1973.

Once I knew a family in which the eldest child was adopted at a time when the parents thought they could have no children. When their natural-born children arrived later on, they diverted all their affection to them, and the adopted eldest was very obviously left out in the cold. It was painful to see, and, judging by the look on the eldest's face, it was painful to experience. It was, of course, a miserable failure in parenthood. But in God's family things are not like that. Like the prodigal in the parable, we may only find ourselves able to say, 'I have sinned . . . I am not worthy to be called Thy son; make me as one of Thy hired servants' (Luke 15:18 f.). But God receives us as sons, and loves us with the same steadfast affection with which He eternally loves His beloved only-begotten. There are no distinctions of affection in the divine family. We are all loved just as fully as Jesus is loved. It is like a fairy story—the reigning monarch adopts waifs and strays to make princes of them—but, praise God, it is not a fairy story: it is hard and solid fact, founded on the bedrock of free and sovereign grace. This, and nothing less than this, is what adoption means. No wonder that John cries, 'Behold, what manner of love . . .!' When once you understand adoption, your heart will cry the same.

p. 196

In the words of Charles Wesley:

*O how shall I the goodness tell,
Father, which Thou to me hast showed?
That I, a child of wrath and hell,
I should be called a child of God.*

p. 195

1 John 3:1-2 (NASB)

See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.

(Knowing God by J. I. Packer) Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
Copyright – J. I. Packer, 1973.

. . . God adopts us out of free love, not because our character and record show us worthy to bear His name, but despite the fact that they show the very opposite. We are not fit for a place in God's family; the idea of His loving and exalting us sinners as He loves and has exalted the Lord Jesus sounds ludicrous and wild—yet that, and nothing less than that, is what our adoption means.

Adoption, by its very nature, is an act of free kindness to the person adopted. If you become a father by adopting a child, you do so because you choose to, not because you are bound to. Similarly, God adopts because He chooses to. He had no duty to do so. He need not have done anything about our sins save punish us as we deserved. But He loved us; so He redeemed us, forgave us, took us as His sons, and gave Himself to us as our Father.
p. 195

(Slaves, Citizens, Sons: Legal Metaphors in the Epistles by Francis Lyall)
 Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – Francis Lyall, 1984.

Both varieties of Roman adoption, therefore, clearly if metaphorically present salvation and its implications. Christians are the sons and daughters of God, being claimed as such by Him (Gal. 4:4-7), having been bought by the blood of the Lamb (Acts 20:28). They no longer owe obedience to their former master, the head of their old family. Formerly the children of wrath (Eph. 2:3), they have become children of God (John 1:12). All their debts and liabilities are sloughed off in the transaction (Col. 2:14). They pass into a new family and take up new responsibilities in it under the authority of the Head of that family. Their property and personal relationships are all subject to His oversight. All their assets are their Father's. And He has disciplinary rights over His children (Heb. 12:5-11).

All this is exactly what the doctrines of election, justification, and sanctification imply. The believer is taken out of his former state and is put in a new relationship with God. He is part of God's family forever, with reciprocal rights and duties. All this time, property, and energy should from that point on be brought under God's control. The Roman ideas of adoption, with the inherent concept of the father's power, are therefore a peculiarly useful illustration of profound doctrines, affording a depth of understanding and appeal that are simply not present in any other possible interpretation of the language. One can understand the translation from death to life and the truth that coming to God is but the start of a new life, not a terminus. And in all the elements of the metaphor the imagery lays wonderful stress on the personal nature of the relationships involved. We are adopted to become sons of God.

p. 88

In **SUMMARY**:

“God sent forth his Son . . . IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT DELIVER OUT BY THE PAYMENT OF A RANSOM THOSE UNDER LAW” and

“God sent forth his Son . . . IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE ADOPTION.”

In this **TWO-FOLD PURPOSE** we see God paying the price in order that we might receive this free gift of adoption as a result of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Anders says:

Christ came for two purposes: First, he came to **redeem those under law**. Christ paid the price of his death to free us from the slavery of the law. Second, Christ came **that we might receive the full rights of sons**. These rights come as a gift, or they don't come at all. Human effort can never secure them.

p. 50

Bartlett says:

Christ came down from where He was to where we were that He might lift us where we were to where He eternally is. The Son of God became Son of Man that sons of men might become sons of God.

p. 76

Bartlett says:

If God sacrificed His Son for our sins, why are many of us so reluctant to sacrifice our sins for His Son, by confessing them and thereby finding forgiveness and cleansing? Never must we let the privilege of our sonship make us forgetful of the sacrifice of our Saviour.

p. 76

Baxter says:

In chapter iv. the emphasis is on the *privileges* of this sonship. Taking up from that word “heir” in the last sentence of chapter iii., Paul now stresses that to be a son is also to be an *heir* (see verses 1, 7, 30). Two words here sum up the believer’s sonship privileges—“adoption” (verse 5) and “inheritance” (verse 30, R.V.). The Greek word here rendered “adoption” (as elsewhere in Paul’s epistles) does not mean adoption in the common English sense of taking some orphan child to be one’s own. It refers rather to adult sonship, to the coming of legal age, and the privileges which this confers. In Paul’s day the reaching of adult sonship and legal heirship was commonly attested by public ceremony. The *public attestation* of the sonship of believers is yet to be (see the word “adoption” in Romans viii. 18-23); but already we enter into the privileges of adult sonship in a *spiritual* sense, because (as here, in Galatians iv. 6, 7) “God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba Father: so that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God” (R.V.).

p. 147

Dunnam says:

McLeod Campbell stated the meaning of this great term *adoption* beautifully and succinctly. “Let us think of Christ as the Son who reveals the Father, that we may know the Father’s heart against which we have sinned, that we may see how sin, in making us godless, has made us orphans, and understand that the grace of God, which is at once the remission of past sin and the gift of eternal life, restores to our orphan spirits their Father and to the Father of spirits his lost children.”

p. 81

Eadie says:

Those under the law are certainly the Jews; and He was born of a woman, born under the law, in order that He might redeem them. As their representative in blood, and in position under the law, He obeyed its precepts and He bore its penalty, so that they were freed from its curse and from its yoke, and became disciples of a more spiritual system, which taught truth in its realities and not in obscure symbols, whose sacrifice was not “the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer,” but “the precious blood of Christ;” which gave them the privilege of kneeling, not toward a mercy-seat of gold, but before the “throne of grace,” and whose High Priest had gone into a holiest place beyond the skies.
pp. 298-9

Gaebelein says:

But a great change had taken place. “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem those under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” God sent His Son from His bosom to become man and “made under the law.” He took His place down here in two relationships. First with man, through the woman, and with the Jews, as born under the law. Sin and death came in by the woman; Christ came into this world by woman also. Through the law, man is under condemnation and Christ came as under that law. But that law was no bondage for Him. He fully worked out the righteousness of the law. Yet his righteous and holy life could not redeem those under the law. Redemption from the curse of the law was accomplished in the death of the Cross. And the glorious result of the coming of the Son of God and His finished work is for all believers in Him “the adoption of sons”—that is, placed, through grace, before God as sons.
p. 220

Hogg & Vine say:

Adoption is thus “the assumption into sonship by an act of God’s grace, as distinct from the sonship that results from birth”.
p. 188

Hogg & Vine say:

In Eph. 1. 5 he declares that the “adoption of sons” had its origin in the counsels of God, which were formed in eternity according to His own will, working uninfluenced by anything external to Himself, and that it has for its object the manifestation of His grace to the Universe.
p. 188

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

The believers prayer is His prayer: hence arises its acceptability with God. **Abba, Father**—The Hebrew says, “Abba” (a *Hebrew* term), the Greek, “Father” (“*Pater*, a *Greek* term in the original), both united together in one Sonship and one cry of faith, “Abba, Father.”
p. 1270

Lightfoot says:

The two clauses correspond to those of the foregoing verse in an inverted order by the grammatical figure called chiasm; ‘The Son of God was born a man, that in Him all men might become sons of God; He was born subject to law, that those subject to law might be rescued from bondage.’ At the same time the figure is not arbitrarily employed here, but the inversion arises out of the necessary sequence. The abolition of the law, the rescue from bondage, was a prior condition of the universal sonship of the faithful.
p. 168

MacArthur says:

... ***the adoption as sons.*** Adoption is the act of bringing someone who is the offspring of another into one’s own family. Since unregenerate people are by nature children of the devil (*see note on 3:26*), the only way they can become God’s children is by spiritual adoption . . .
p. 1670

Pinnock says:

It is not that the law itself is a wicked thing. God intended that the law should awaken man's sense of need and bring him to Christ and the gospel. But it had been twisted and made to serve an evil purpose. It was being used to place men into bondage and tyrannize them in a way God never intended. God uses law to bring men to Christ. Satan uses law to trap people in dark despair or delude them into thinking they can be justified by their law-keeping.

p. 54

Spurgeon says:

Adoption gives us the rights of children, regeneration gives us the nature of children: we are partakers of both of these, for we are sons.

p. 317

Spurgeon says:

Again, *adoption comes to us by redemption*. Read the passage which precedes the text: “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Beloved, prize redemption, and never listen to teaching which would destroy its meaning or lower its importance. Remember that ye were not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish. You were under the law, and subject to its curse, for you had broken it most grievously, and you were subject to its penalty, for it is written, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die”; and yet again, “cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.” You were also under the terror of the law, for you feared its wrath; and you were under its irritating power, for often when the commandment came, sin within you revived and you died. But now you are redeemed from all; as the Holy Ghost saith, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Now ye are not under the law, but under grace, and this because Christ came under the law and kept it both by His active and His passive obedience, fulfilling all its commands and bearing all its penalty on your behalf and in your room and stead. Henceforth you are the redeemed of the Lord, and enjoy a liberty which comes by no other way but that of the eternal ransom.
p. 318

Vos says:

The Greek word for “redeem” is an especially beautiful term. The concept is of one going into the slave market and purchasing the slave and then taking him out of the market, setting him free.
p. 73

Vos says:

The result of redemption is *adoption* to divine sonship. The redeemed one is now an adult son of God, a man come of age, and is no longer a minor under guardians and stewards (i.e., *elements* or *law*).
p. 73

Hogg & Vine say:

The purpose of God in sending His Son is elsewhere said to be:
 that the world might be saved through Him, John 3. 17;
 that He might give life to the world, John 6. 32, 33;
 that He might be an offering for sin, Rom. 8. 3;
 that men might live through Him, 1 John 4. 9;
 that He might be the propitiation for our sins, 1 John 4. 10;
 that He might be the Saviour of the world, 1 John 4. 14.
 In a few passages the phrase "He was manifested" is found:
 to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, Heb. 9. 26;
 as the Lamb of God, 1 Peter 1. 19, 20;
 to take away sins, 1 John 3. 5.

Other direct and categorical statements of the objects before the Lord Jesus in His coming into the world found in N.T. are:
 to call sinners, Matt. 9. 13;
 to seek and to save that which was lost, Luke 19. 10;
 to do the will of the Father, John 6. 38, cp. Heb. 10. 7. 9;
 for judgment, that they which see not may see; and that they which see might become blind, John 9. 39;
 that they [the sheep] might have abundant life, John 10. 10;
 in order to die, John 12. 27, cp. Heb. 2. 9;
 that whosoever believeth on Him may not abide in the darkness, John 12. 46;
 to bear witness to the truth, John 18. 37;
 to save sinners, 1 Tim. 1. 15;
 to die, and through death to destroy the Devil, Heb. 2. 14;
 to deliver those who were in fear of death, Heb. 2. 15;
 to be a High Priest, and so to make propitiation for sins, Heb. 2. 17.
 pp. 189-90

Wiersbe says:

We do not *enter* God's family by adoption the way a homeless child would enter a loving family in our own society. The only way to get into God's family is by *regeneration*, being "born again" (John 3:3).

The New Testament word for *adoption* means "to place as an adult son." It has to do with our *standing* in the family of God: We are not little children but adult sons with all of the privileges of sonship.

It is unfortunate that many translations of the New Testament do not make a distinction between *children of God* and *sons of God*. We are the children of God by faith in Christ, born into God's family. But every child of God is automatically placed into the family as a *son*, and as a son, he has all the legal rights and privileges of a son. When a sinner trusts Christ and is saved, as far as his *condition* is concerned, he is a "spiritual babe" who needs to grow (1 Peter 2:2-3); but as far as his *position* is concerned, he is an adult son who can draw on the Father's wealth and who can exercise all the wonderful privileges of sonship.

We *enter* God's family by regeneration, but we *enjoy* God's family by adoption. The Christian does not have to wait to begin enjoying the spiritual riches he has in Christ.

p. 92

Wiersbe says:

Paul has told us *who* came—God's Son; he has told us *when* He came and *now* He came. Now he explains *why* He came: "to redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. 4:5).

p. 94

Wuest says:

The word *redeem* is from *exagorazo* "to buy out of the slave market." The word *law* is not preceded by the definite article, hence law in general is referred to here. Paul conceived of the Gentiles as possessing a law, and that law being of divine origin. He speaks of the law written in the hearts of the Gentiles (Rom. 2:14, 15). This law written upon the Gentile heart could easily become externalized and be made into a legalistic system.

p. 115

Wuest says:

The Lord Jesus was born under the law, lived under the law, and died under the penalty of the law which we broke, and in paying our penalty, He delivered us from any claims which the law had against us. He died under law, and in His resurrection, was raised into a realm where law as a legalistic system does not exist. This He did, in order that He might not only deliver us from the law but also raise believers with Himself into a realm where law does not operate. Instead therefore of being children (immature ones, *nepios*) under law, we became adult sons (*huios*) under grace.
p. 116

Wuest says:

The word *crying*, from *krazo*, signifies “a loud and earnest cry,” or “a public announcement.” See Matthew 9:27, Acts 14:14, Romans 9:27, John 7:28, 37. In the LXX it is often used of prayer addressed to God (Ps. 3:4, 107:13). It emphasizes the earnestness and intensity of the Holy Spirit’s utterance in the Christian. The word itself does not convey the idea of joy, but the intensity of the Spirit’s utterance in this case must include a joyous note. The word *crying* is, in the Greek text, associated with the word *Spirit*, so that it is the Spirit who is doing the crying.
pp. 116-17

Let's meditate for just a moment on the "PAYMENT OF A RANSOM."

This TAKES US BACK to:

Galatians 1:4 (DAV)

who gave himself in behalf of our sins so that He might rescue us out from this present evil age according to the will of our God and father.

This TAKES US BACK also to:

Galatians 2:20 (DAV)

With Christ I have been crucified and I no longer am living but Christ is living in me and that life which now I am living in the flesh I am living by faith, which faith is in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself on my behalf.

It also TAKES US BACK to:

Galatians 3:13 (DAV)

Christ delivered us by the payment of a ransom from the curse of the law. Having become a curse in behalf of us because it is written cursed is everyone who is suspended upon a tree.

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

All things are safe in Jehovah's hands; what we entrust to the Lord will be secure, both now and in that day of days towards which we are hastening. It is peaceful living, and glorious dying, to repose in the care of heaven. At all times we should commit our all to Jesus' faithful hand; then, though life may hang on a thread, and adversities may multiply as the sands of the sea, our soul shall dwell at ease, and delight itself in quiet resting places.
p. 481

v. 6 Now because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his son into our hearts crying Abba, Father.

The NET Bible translates verse 6:

And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, who calls “Abba! Father!”

Peterson paraphrases verse 6:

You can tell for sure that you are now fully adopted as his own children because God sent the Spirit of his Son into our lives crying out, “Papa! Father!”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

4:6. God the Father not only “sent His Son”; He also sent **the Spirit**. Thus the full Trinity is involved in the work of salvation. The Holy Spirit is a gift of God to every believer because of sonship. No sons or daughters lack the Spirit. Further, He is present within each believer’s heart to give evidence of that one’s position in God’s family. The Spirit moves the believer to pray to God, addressing Him as **Abba, Father** (cf. Rom. 8:15). The word “Abba” is the Aramaic word for “Father.” It is the diminutive form used by small children in addressing their fathers. It is appropriate to see its similarity to the English word “Daddy.” Used by Christ (cf. Mark 14:36), this familiar form indicates intimacy and trust as opposed to the formalism of legalism.

“God sent forth his Son” in verse 4 and now

“GOD SENT FORTH THE SPIRIT OF HIS SON” here in verse 6.

Being filled with the Spirit is an inside job. If you insist on an outer experience, then you make emotions the king. I used to think a few men had a monopoly on the power of the Holy Spirit.

I have since learned the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on a few men. He not only wants to be **RESIDENT** but **PRESIDENT**.

The Apostle Paul is here referring to the **HOLY SPIRIT**. It is this third Person of the Trinity—the Holy Spirit—who is our new Guardian.

Ephesians 1:14 (NASB)

who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.

What is the divine protection from license now that we have been set free from the law? The answer is in a **PERSON**—the Holy Spirit.

So many Christians let the law substitute for the sensitivity to the Holy Spirit’s work in their lives.

Ephesians 4:30 (NASB)

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 (NASB)

Do not quench the Spirit;

Galatians 5:16 (DAV)

But I am saying, walk by means of the Spirit and you will by no means fulfill the desire of the flesh.

The Holy Spirit is but a down payment, with the assurance that more is to follow of our inheritance.

The **FATHER** “sent forth his Son” in verse 4,

the **SON REDEEMED** us in verse 5, and

the **SPIRIT CONFIRMS** this work in “**OUR HEARTS**” in verse 6.

This is entirely a work of God—the law had nothing to do with it.

The Lord Jesus in the **Garden of Gethsemane** prays to the Father in:

Mark 14:36 (NASB)

And He was saying, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt.”

This speaks of our new relationship when we come to know Christ as our Savior. We also have God as our Father.

Pinnock says:

Then Paul refers to another divine sending. God sends the Spirit into the hearts of believers to assure them that they really possess what Christ has won for them. He comes to attest subjectively what Christ has achieved for us objectively. The Spirit's presence in our lives assures us of our sonship and enables us to pray confidently, "Abba! Father!" "Abba" was the Aramaic word which Jesus Himself used in speaking to God His Father (Mark 14:36). It is a word that suggests great intimacy. The Spirit comes to teach spiritual children how to use the language of sons instead of slaves. Every child of God receives the gift of the Spirit. There is no extra condition beyond faith to fulfil. The Spirit belongs to every believer in Jesus. Groups in our day which claim the Spirit as a personal possession and urge people to seek a special experience from God are on the wrong track. The Spirit leads people to confess Christ as Lord, and indwells all who do so (I Cor. 12:3, 13).
p. 56

Vos says:

It is one thing for God to assert that a person who has placed his faith in Christ enjoys an adoption to sonship in the family of God; it is another thing to give some evidence of the fact. The voice of the Holy Spirit within the believer confirms his sonship, and cries out to the Father in filial love. *Abba* is the Aramaic for father; whenever it occurs in the New Testament, it has the Greek interpretation added. When the believer has this subjective experience, he knows he is a son and no longer under the tutelage of a minor subject to legalism.

The Greek of verse 7 is much more expressive than the English: "So that (as a result of Christ's redemptive work on your behalf and His implanting the Spirit in your hearts) you are no longer (though you once were) a slave (in bondage under the law) but an adult son; and if an adult son (rather than one who is still a minor under certain controls), then an heir (enjoying a marvelous new spiritual heritage) through God [the preferred Greek textual reading]." "Through God" is very instructive. The entire Trinity has been involved in making the believer a son and an heir: the Father sent the Son who gave Himself to redeem us, and the Father implanted the Spirit in our hearts to act as a seal and an earnest (Eph 1:13-14) of our inheritance and aid us to live like sons of the King.
p. 74

What Paul is saying in this verse is that the evidence of being a son or a child of God is the presence of the **"SPIRIT OF HIS SON IN [OUR] HEARTS,"** enabling us to express this relationship by calling Him Father.

(The Agony of Deceit by Michael Horton, ed.) Chicago: Moody Press.
Copyright – The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1990.

Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition, when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

p. 49

Even if we do gain perfect health and perfect wealth and achieve the power to accomplish many miracles, we can still lack the key to ultimate satisfaction: knowing God. Augustine once said, "Our hearts are restless until we find our rest in Thee," not, "until we find our rest in miracles," or, "in prosperity," or "in great feelings," but in God Himself. All humans have a spiritual hunger that only God Himself can satisfy.

p. 53

Barclay says:

The proof that we are sons comes from the instinctive cry of the heart. In man's deepest need, man looks up and cries, "Father!" to God. Paul uses the double phrase, "Abba! Father!" *Abba* is the Aramaic word for Father. It must have been often on Jesus' lips, and the sound of it was so sacred that men kept it in the original tongue. This instinctive cry of the heart of man, Paul believes to be the work of the Holy Spirit; and if our hearts so cry then we know that we are sons, and all the inheritance of grace is ours. For Paul, the man who governed his life by slavery to the law was still a child; the man who had learned the way of grace had become a nature, full-grown man in the Christian faith.

p. 38

Barclay says:

It is quite true that Paul repeatedly speaks of God sending his Spirit, or the Spirit of his Son, into our hearts. It is because God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts that we can call him Father in the fullest and the most intimate sense of the term (Gal. 4.6). It is the Spirit dwelling in us who gives life to our mortal bodies (Rom. 8.11). Our bodies have become temples of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6.19). God has given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (II Cor. 1.22). If this be the case, then a Christian is distinctively a man into whom this presence and this power have entered as it cannot enter into other men. It would then be true to say that the spirit of the Christian is nothing else than the Holy Spirit taking up his residence in the man, and giving his life a peace and a beauty and power which are simply not available or possible for the non-Christian man.

p. 14

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

Observe the subtle link between the central ideas of this verse and the phrase “weak and miserable principles” in v.9. The opposing powers are “weak” because they cannot redeem and “miserable” (or “poor”) because they cannot provide the adoption.

p. 729

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

Paul has already pointed out the first great redemptive act of God in history: God sent his Son. Here he adds the second act: “Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’” In other words, to the other doctrines of the faith already spilling over from vv.4-5 Paul now adds Trinitarian teaching, for he is telling us that salvation consists in its fullness of acts by God the Father in sending both God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Moreover, this salvation is both objective and subjective. God the Father sent the Son in order that believers might have the *position* of sons and daughters, and he sent his Spirit so that they might have the *experience* of the same reality.

p. 729

Bartlett says:

Used with “Father” in this way, it is suggestive of a tender and joyous response to God on the part of a child of His. If we could but realize more fully how our heavenly Father loves us, our hearts could not contain the love and joy we should find in Him. The ecstasy experienced by an earthly father when his little one first cries, “Daddy!” is a faint but touching picture of the happiness that must flood the heart of God when a new-born babe in Christ first prays, “Dear Father.”
p. 77

Bickel & Jantz say:

Galatians 4:6 is significant for another reason. It shows that all three persons of the Godhead—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—are involved in your salvation: God the Father *authored* the plan of salvation, Jesus the Son *accomplished* the plan of salvation, and the Holy Spirit *applies* the plan of salvation.
p. 88

Calvin says:

Crying. This participle, I think, is used in order to express greater boldness. Hesitation does not allow us to speak freely, but keeps the mouth nearly shut, while the half-broken word can hardly escape from a stammering tongue. “Crying,” on the other hand, expresses firmness and unwavering confidence. “For we have not received again the spirit of bondage to fear, but of freedom to full confidence.” (Rom. viii. 15.)
p. 121

De Haan says:

The difference, therefore, of being under law or under grace is the difference between a slave and a son. A slave cannot call his master, “father”; it is reserved only for children. But Paul uses another expression never used until after Calvary. It is ABBA, Father. No one seems to know what the true meaning of “abba” really is. It is not Hebrew nor Aramaic nor Greek. It seems to be a term of intimacy, of affection and endearment, indicating the closest possible relationship. It is used only three times in Scripture, once in Mark 14:36, where Jesus in His agony in Gethsemane cries:

Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me (Mark 14:36).

The second time it is used in Romans 8:15, where Paul says:

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear (that is, the fear of the law); but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The Spirit itself (himself) beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God (Rom. 8:15, 16).

The third time the word “Abba” is used is in our passage in Galatians 4:6. It is then a term used only by the children of God who are under grace, being contrasted to the position of a servant under the law, and called the “spirit of bondage again to fear” (Rom. 8:15).

pp. 142-3

Dunnam says:

Abba, Father describes our relationship, a shared love and fellowship in which the Father pours out all His blessings upon His children. And we pray in that knowledge and with the childlike anticipation of receiving all the Father has for us.

p. 82

Eadie says:

The Spirit in our hearts cries—no Hebraism meaning “making to cry.” But the Divine Agent Himself, as the Spirit of adoption, is represented as crying. For the impulse is His, the realized sonship is of Him, the deepened sense of want is of His creation, in the heart whence rises the tender and earnest address, Abba, Father.

p. 303

Gaebelein says:

. . . God sent the blessed proof and power of sonship. “He sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” The Holy Spirit was given as the seal of redemption, and as the joy of sonship. “Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

p. 220

Hendriksen says:

The text reads: crying, “Abba! Father!” In reality the outcry of joyful recognition, sweet response, appropriating love, overwhelming gratitude, and last but not least, filial trust, is ascribed to the Spirit. Nevertheless, this must be understood immediately, meaning that it is the Spirit “whereby we cry Abba! Father!” (Rom. 8:15). Similarly, in connection with the church’s yearning for Christ’s return we read, “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come” (Rev. 22:17). Here, too, the bride is moved by the Spirit. Spirit and bride always work together (Rom. 8:16).

pp. 161-2

Henry says:

1. The wonders of divine love and mercy towards us, particularly of God the Father, in sending his Son into the world to redeem and save us—of the Son of God, in suffering so much, for us—and of the Holy Spirit, in condescending to dwell in the hearts of believers for such gracious purposes.

2. The great and invaluable advantages which Christians enjoy under the gospel. We receive the adoption of sons. We who by nature are children of wrath and disobedience have become by grace children of love. We receive *the Spirit of adoption*. All who are received into the number partake of the nature of the children of God; for he will have all his children to resemble him. Those who have the nature of sons shall have the inheritance of sons.
p. 1842

Lovett says:

SON. Leaving the bosom of the Father, Jesus suffered a double humiliation: (1) entering the human stream by human birth to arrive as a newborn baby, (2) letting Himself become subject to the Jewish Law. This He did to free those trapped under the Law (as well as those in the worldly schools of religion, including the Galatians) by changing their status from minors to adults. Through faith in Him, they could be clothed with Him to receive instant adulthood. When a Roman lad reached 21 he was ceremoniously “adopted” as an adult. That is, he was formally declared to be an adult. We are the adopted sons of God in the Roman sense, for when we receive Christ we are accepted as adults. We are not adopted into God’s family in the modern sense, for that would deny the truth of the new birth (John 3:3).
p. 47

Lucado says:

What good parent loves one child more than another? None! However, a wise and caring dad will demonstrate his affection to his children in different ways. Depending on factors like personality and age and life situations, a mom will interact with her children in completely different ways. And so it is with God. He doesn't deal with his children exactly the same. Many realities come into play. And this is why we should never compare ourselves to others or envy another Christian's relationship with God. Each of our relationships with God will be unique. He will bless you in certain ways; he will bless another in different ways. Despite the discrepancies, we are each loved with his perfect, unconditional love. Each child adored and infinitely special. Each child an heir of endless spiritual blessings!

p. 69

Pinnock says:

Then Paul refers to another divine sending. God sends the Spirit into the hearts of believers to assure them that they really possess what Christ has won for them. He comes to attest subjectively what Christ has achieved for us objectively. The Spirit's presence in our lives assures us of our sonship and enables us to pray confidently, "Abba! Father!" "Abba" was the Aramaic word which Jesus Himself used in speaking to God His Father (Mark 14:36). It is a word that suggests great intimacy. The Spirit comes to teach spiritual children how to use the language of sons instead of slaves. Every child of God receives the gift of the Spirit. There is no extra condition beyond faith to fulfill. The Spirit belongs to every believer in Jesus. Groups in our day which claim the Spirit as a personal possession and urge people to seek a special experience from God are on the wrong track. The Spirit leads people to confess Christ as Lord, and indwells all who do so (I Cor. 12:3, 13).

p. 56

Spurgeon says:

Whatever Christ is before God that I am, for I am a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

“So near, so very near to God,
I cannot nearer be.
For in the person of His Son
I am as near as He.

So dear, so very dear to God,
I cannot dearer be.
The love wherewith He loves His Son,
Such is His love to me.”

Can you say, “He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure? As long as Jesus lives I cannot die, for it is written, ‘Because He lives, I shall live also.’

‘My name from the palms of His hands
Eternity cannot erase,
Impressed on His heart it remains
In marks of indelible grace.”

p. 315

Spurgeon says:

Again, we further learn from the passage that *we now enjoy the privilege of sonship*. According to the run of the passage the apostle means not only that we are children, but that we are full-grown sons. “Because ye are sons,” means,—because the time appointed of the Father is come, and you are of age, and no longer under tutors and governors.

p. 318

Spurgeon says:

Now, notice, *it is the Spirit of God that cries*—a most remarkable fact. Some are inclined to view the expression as a Hebraism, and read it, He “makes us to cry”; but, beloved, the text saith not so, and we are not at liberty to alter it upon such a pretence. We are always right in keeping to what God says, and here we plainly read of the Spirit in our hearts that He is crying “Abba, Father.” The apostle in Romans viii. 15 says, “Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby *we* cry, Abba, Father,” but here he describes the Spirit himself as crying “Abba, Father.” We are certain that when he ascribed the cry of “Abba, Father” to us, he did not wish to exclude the Spirit’s cry, because in the twenty-sixth verse of the famous eighth of Romans he says, “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Thus He represents the Spirit Himself as groaning with unutterable groanings within the child of God, so that when he wrote to the Romans he had on his mind the same thought which he expressed to the Galatians,—that it is the Spirit itself which cries and groans in us “Abba, Father.” How is this? Is it not ourselves that cry? Yes, assuredly; and yet the Spirit cries also. The expressions are both correct. The Holy Spirit prompts and inspires the cry. He puts the cry into the heart and mouth of the believer. It is His cry because He suggests it, approves of it, and educates us to it. We should never have cried thus if He had not first taught us the way. As a mother teaches her child to speak, so He puts this cry of “Abba, Father” into our mouths: yea, it is He who forms in our hearts the desire after our Father, God, and keeps it there. He is the Spirit of adoption, and the Author of adoption’s special and significant cry.
p. 320

Wuest says:

And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, Abba [namely], my Father.
p. 206

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon) Oswego, IL: Fox River Press. Copyright– Fox River Press, 2005.

The man who is deeply discontented with himself is probably growing fast into the full likeness of Christ. 3325.508
p. 66

(The Loveliness Of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford selected by Ellen S. Lister) Carlisle, PA.: Banner of Truth Trust. Copyright – Banner of Truth, 2007.

Give him leave to take his own way of dispensation with you; and though it be rough, forgive him; he defieth you to have as much patience to him, as he hath borne to you . . . When his people cannot have a providence of silk and roses, they must be content with such an one as he carveth out for them.
p. 81

(A Lifetime of Wisdom: Embracing the Way God Heals You by Joni Eareckson Tada) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright– Joni Eareckson Tada, 2009.

The truth is, if God says no to one of our requests, it is only that He might say yes to something infinitely more valuable and beyond our reckoning.
p. 123

v. 7 So that no longer are you a slave but a son, now if (you are) a son, (you are) also an heir through God.

The NET Bible translates verse 7:

So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if you are a son, then you are also an heir through God.

Peterson paraphrases verse 7:

Doesn't that privilege of intimate conversation with God make it plain that you are not a slave, but a child? And if you are a child, you're also an heir, with complete access to the inheritance.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

4:7. To conclude, Paul declared that the Galatians were **no longer** slaves, but were sons and heirs. The plural forms in verse 6 were replaced by the singular forms in verse 7 thus making the application to the reader direct and personal. In God's family, sonship carries with it heirship . . .

Romans 8:14-17 (NASB)

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

Whereas in verse 6 we see the evidence of relationship by the cry, “Abba, Father!” now the open declaration of it.

The **RESULT** is stated in verse 7:

“SO THAT NO LONGER ARE YOU A SLAVE, BUT A SON.”

Vos says:

The Greek of verse 7 is much more expressive than the English: “So that (as a result of Christ’s redemptive work on your behalf and His implanting the Spirit in your hearts) you are no longer (though you once were) a slave (in bondage under the law) but an adult son; and if an adult son (rather than one who is still a minor under certain controls), then an heir (enjoying a marvelous new spiritual heritage) through God [the preferred Greek textual reading].” “Through God” is very instructive. The entire Trinity has been involved in making the believer a son and an heir: the Father sent the Son who gave Himself to redeem us, and the Father implanted the Spirit in our hearts to act as a seal and an earnest (Eph 1:13-14) of our inheritance and aid us to live like sons of the King.
p. 74

No longer are we slaves to the law, but sons of God through Jesus Christ. The spiritual experience of coming to know Christ has set us free from the bondage of the law.

The equation is as follows:

from a **SLAVE**

to a **SON**

by the **SAVIOR**

through the **SPIRIT**.

Martin Luther said of this verse:

Mr. Law, you have lost your throne to Christ.
(source unknown)

(When Being Good Isn't Good Enough by Stephen Brown) Nashville, TN:
Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright – Stephen Brown, 1990.

I thought all that was my job. I'll bet, if you are a mature Christian, you thought it was your job too. Almost everything we do wrong in regard to freedom—judging other people, trying to get them to fit our Christian mold, telling them what they ought and ought not do, deciding on whether they are good enough to be called a part of our family, being overly concerned with our witness in the community—is the business of the Holy Spirit.

I remember the first time I had a secretary. I had been serving a small church on Cape Cod where the pastor did it all: typed the letters, prepared the bulletin, worked the mimeograph, and answered the phone. (I almost said made the coffee, but that would be sexist, so I won't say it.) I wasn't too skilled at those things, but nobody else was around to do them, so I was elected.

When I became the pastor of a larger church. I continued trying to do all those things. Guess what happened? The church secretary had to train me. Her name was Mrs. Kelsey, and she came to me one day and said, "Mr. Brown, I'm getting rather uncomfortable."

I told her to sit down and we would talk about it.

She was hardly seated before she started talking. "I have a job description here, and you keep fulfilling my job description. MY concern is the church, and if we can save some money, I will be glad to look for another job. However, to be perfectly honest with you, you are not doing my job very well. In fact, you are making a mess of it. So, either fire me or use me."

She then taught me how to dictate and delegate and trust her to do her job. It was wonderful!

But it wasn't half as wonderful as the discovery that I was doing the Holy Spirit's job and didn't have to. Our Lord the Holy Spirit is perfectly capable of leading Christians in the right direction. He is also perfectly capable of convicting them and of motivating them to do what the Father wants them to do.

I don't know about you, but for me that is a great relief. Someone once told a man who had said he was "self-made" that he relieved God of a tremendous responsibility! Well, I don't want to be self-made. I don't want the people I teach and pastor to be self-made or Steve-made. I want them to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

p. 145-46

In this particular study we have been considering together:

YOU WERE RUNNING WELL UNTIL: You Didn't Graduate

It is the recognition of the fact that when we become His child, we also become adult sons and have the privilege of inheritance. As a result of recognizing our position in Christ, the glorious freedom which is ours then causes us to realize that we are free from the law.

Romans 5:1-2 (NASB)

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

There are **THREE GIFTS** that God wants to give us in response to our faith in receiving Jesus Christ as Savior:

1. **PEACE WITH GOD,**
2. **ACCESS TO GOD,** and
3. **HOPE IN GOD.**

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

This verse sums up all that Paul has said previously. Formerly slaves, Christians are now both children of God and heirs. It is connected with the previous verse in that the Spirit teaches us about our relationship with God as Father. The change from the plural of v.6 to the singular of v.7 brings the argument home to the individual reader. Each reader should therefore ask, "Do I know the reality of such an internal witness by God's Spirit? Am I assured of these things?"

p. 729

Eadie says:

... “but if a son, also an heir.” The two positions are identical—the one is bound up in the other. The slave is no heir, but he who is a son is also an heir by the fact of his being a son. Rom. viii. 17 . . . If thou art a son, in addition to such sonship thou art an heir—an heir of the promise made by God to Abraham and his seed.
p. 305

Fergusson says:

Here he concludeth from what is said, first, that under the New Testament we are no more servants, as being redeemed from that legal yoke of bondage under which the ancient church was: and, secondly, that we are sons, and by consequence heirs of God, which is verified mainly in real believers under the New Testament, in so far as they are sons come to age, and heirs past tutory, actually partaking of their father’s inheritance in a larger measure than believers did under the Old Testament, as was explained, ver. 5; all which privileges are bestowed upon us through Christ, and through virtue of his coming unto the flesh.
p. 70

Gutzke says:

“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (4:7). A servant is one who does what he is told. But a son is one who wants to be well pleasing to his father, who belongs to his father. He is part of the whole family, so everything about it belongs to him. He is an heir of his father and a joint-heir with the other children in the family, so everything that is done for the benefit of the family is really done for the benefit of this son. Believers are to be considered as sons; in a very real way this is how they can be seen. It is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that makes the difference. As long as a person is under the command of the law, he is as a servant. But when he is doing what he is doing because he wants to be well pleasing, because he belongs, he is acting like a son. “And if a son, then an heir.” He is an heir of God through Christ, just as he is a child of God.
p. 92

Harrison says:

What this means is now to unfold to our astonished vision. God our Father has made us, who were utterly condemned, His heirs. He wants to bestow all that He has upon us, as in the parable of Luke 15 the father is heard to say, "Son, all that I have is thine."

p. 70

Harrison says:

The imagination is staggered before such a statement. God our Father owns everything. Christ, His one Son, 'He hath appointed heir of all things' (Heb. 1:2). And now—can we take it in?—He has made us in His New Covenant will "joint heirs with Christ." Look up into the heavens; there are trillions upon trillions of worlds. Whose are they? Ours! Christ's and ours! And since the Father has made us *joint* heirs with Him He cannot possess any of the inheritance without us. That is what joint heirship means; we must share together. That's the ultimate of being on His Side.

Child of His love, all things are yours—He tells you this in I Corinthians 3:22, 23 to arouse you to a realization of riches beyond your utmost powers of imagination to comprehend. Consider the universe. Whose is it, but His and yours? Then live royally.

pp. 70-71

Henry says:

... we are no longer under the servitude of the law, but, upon our believing in Christ, become the sons of God, and, being the sons, we are also heirs of God.

p. 1842

Luther says:

This sentence clinches Paul's argument. He says: "With the Holy Spirit in our hearts crying, 'Abba, Father,' there can be no doubt that God has adopted us for His children and that our subjection to the Law has come to an end." We are now the free children of God. We may now say to the Law: "Mister Law, you have lost your throne to Christ. I am free now and a son of God. You cannot curse me any more." Do not permit the Law to lie in your conscience. Your conscience belongs to Christ. Let Christ lie in it and not the **Law**.

p. 163

MacArthur says:

The consummation of divine sonship is given in the promise of joint inheritance with Christ. The ultimate outcome of our relationship is inheritance of the Father's estate. In the spiritual realm, a person who believes in Jesus Christ is no longer under the law, **no longer** its **slave**. Because he is now in the Son, he is himself **a son; and if a son, then an heir through God**. Just as it was in the ancient laws of adoption, so it is in the family of God—sonship means heirship.

Because believers are God's children, they are "heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). What an incomprehensible truth; that by giving ourselves to Jesus Christ in faith, God gives us everything His Son possesses!

p. 110

McGee says:

Paul Rader, who was one of the greatest preachers this country has ever produced, used some very striking expressions. One day on the platform he said, "The old nature that you and I have is just like an old dead cat. What you need to do is reach down and get that old dead cat by the tail and throw it as far away as you can." I can say "amen" to that. I wish I could get rid of my old nature. One day Dr. Chafer heard him use this illustration, and he said to him afterward, "Paul, you forget that the old dead cat has nine lives. When you throw him away, his going to be right back tomorrow." We will never become perfect saints of God, but we can experience being sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."
p. 177

Vos says:

It is one thing for God to assert that a person who has placed his faith in Christ enjoys an adoption to sonship in the family of God; it is another thing to give some evidence of the fact. The voice of the Holy Spirit within the believer confirms his sonship, and cries out to the Father in filial love. *Abba* is the Aramaic for father; whenever it occurs in the New Testament, it has the Greek interpretation added. When the believer has this subjective experience, he knows he is a son and no longer under the tutelage of a minor subject to legalism.

The Greek of verse 7 is much more expressive than the English: "So that (as a result of Christ's redemptive work on your behalf and His implanting the Spirit in your hearts) you are no longer (though you once were) a slave (in bondage under the law) but an adult son; and if an adult son (rather than one who is still a minor under certain controls), then an heir (enjoying a marvelous new spiritual heritage) through God [the preferred Greek textual reading]." "Through God" is very instructive. The entire Trinity has been involved in making the believer a son and an heir: the Father sent the Son who gave Himself to redeem us, and the Father implanted the Spirit in our hearts to act as a seal and an earnest (Eph 1:13-14) of our inheritance and aid us to live like sons of the King.
p. 74

Wiersbe says:

The contrast here is not between immature children and adult sons, but between *servants* and *sons*. Like the prodigal son, the Galatians wanted their Father to accept them as servants, when they really were sons (Luke 15:18-19). The contrasts are easy to see.
p. 95

Wiersbe says:

In one sense, our adoption is not yet final, because we are awaiting the return of Christ and the redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:23). Some scholars think that this second stage in our adoption corresponds to the Roman practice when a man adopted someone outside his family to be his son. First there was a *private* ceremony at which the son was purchased; then there was a *public* ceremony at which the adoption was declared openly before the officials.

Christians have experienced the first stage: We have been purchased by Christ and indwelt by the Spirit. We are awaiting the second stage: the public declaration at the return of Christ when “we shall be like him” (1 John 3:1-3). We are “sons and heirs,” and the best part of our inheritance is yet to come (see 1 Peter 1:1-5).
p. 96

Wuest says:

So that no longer are you a slave but a son, and since you are a son, you are also an heir through God.
p. 206

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI:
Discovery House. Copyright– Oswald Chambers Publications
Association, 1992.

Pride is the sin of making “self” our god. And some of us today do this, not like the Pharisee, but like the tax collector (see Luke 18:9-14). For you to say, “Oh, I’m no saint,” is acceptable by human standards of pride, but it is unconscious blasphemy against God. You defy God to make you a saint, as if to say, “I am too weak and hopeless and outside the reach of the atonement by the Cross of Christ.” Why aren’t you a saint? It is either that you do not want to be a saint, or that you do not believe that God can make you into one. You say it would be all right if God saved you and took you straight to heaven. That is exactly what He will do! And not only do we make our home with Him, but Jesus said of His Father and Himself, “. . . We will come to him and make Our home with him” (John 14:23). Put not conditions on your life—let Jesus be everything to you, and He will take you home with Him not only for a day, but for eternity.
(June 12)

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts:
Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

O how foolish must we be, if we do not live in habitual communion with Him. When the road is long, and dangerous, and difficult, we need not wonder that friends seldom meet each other, but when they live together, shall Jonathan forget his David? A wife may when her husband is upon a journey, abide many days without holding converse with him, but she could never endure to be separated from him if she knew him to be in one of the chambers of her own house. Why, believer, dost not thou sit at His banquet of wine? Seek thy Lord, for He is near; embrace Him, for He is thy Brother. Hold Him fast, for He is thine Husband; and press Him to thine heart, for He is of thine own flesh.
p. 426

(The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You by John Ortberg)
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright— John Ortberg, 2010.

By the time our third child was born, I figured we had been through this drill before and knew what to expect. The doctor was at my wife's bedside for the birth, and everything was going according to plan—until he got a look of deep concern on his face.

"There is a problem," he said.

The umbilical cord had wrapped around the baby's neck, cutting off oxygen to the brain. The doctor had been pretty talkative up to that point, but all of a sudden he wasn't talking at all. Everyone was quiet and focused, and all I could do was say, "Oh God, oh God, oh God, oh God. Make it be okay. Don't let anything happen to this little life."

A few seconds later the doctor was able, inside, to cut the cord. Blood spurted all over the place, and I started to feel dizzy and queasy.

"I have to sit in a chair somewhere," I announced, "because I'm going to go down." (That did not win me a lot of points with anyone.) So I sat with my head between my knees for the next several minutes while the doctor finished delivering the baby—a beautiful, healthy little boy.

"Is everything okay?" Nancy asked.

"Yes, Mrs. Ortberg," the doctor replied. "Your son and your husband are both pinkening up at the same time."

When we are desperate, we call out for God. When we reach the end of our rope, it is only human to reach out to God. When we are thrilled, we thank God. When we are crushed by guilt, we cry out to God.

You pray more than you know. Even in school, we pray. People get concerned about legal issues with that, but experience tells us that as long as there are tests in school, there will be prayer in school, silent though it may be.

pp. 131-2

I love the words of Fanny Crosby's hymn:

(The Treasures of Fanny Crosby by Fanny Crosby) Uhrichsville, OH:
Barbour. Copyright– Barbour Publishing, Inc., 2003.

Thou my everlasting portion,
More than friend or life to me.
All along my pilgrim journey,
Savior, let me walk with Thee.

Close to Thee, close to Thee,
All along my pilgrim journey,
Savior, let me walk with Thee.

p. 28

(Coming Back Stronger: Unleashing the Hidden Power of Adversity by Drew Brees with Chris Fabry) Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House. Copyright– Brees Company, Inc., 2010.

It turns out that family really means the people in your life who are always there, even when you are at your weakest.

p. 87

How about joining me in singing verse 3 of that great old hymn:

A Child of the King

I once was an outcast stranger on earth,
A sinner by choice, and an alien by birth;
But I've been adopted, my name's written down,
An heir to a mansion, a robe, and a crown.

Refrain

I'm a child of the King,
a child of the King:
With Jesus my Savior,
I'm a child of the King.

(source unknown)

v. 8 But at that time, (in fact) not knowing God you were enslaved to those which by nature are not being gods.

The NET Bible titles these last four verses in this section and then translates verse 8:

Heirs of Promise Are Not to Return to Law

Formerly when you did not know God, you were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods at all.

Peterson paraphrases verse 8:

Earlier, before you knew God personally, you were enslaved to so-called gods that had nothing of the divine about them.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says of Galatians 4:8-20:

A PERSONAL PLEA (4:8-20). THE APOSTLE TURNED FROM A FORMAL ARGUMENT TO A PERSONAL APPEAL FOR THE GALATIANS NOT TO RETURN TO A SLAVERY SIMILAR TO THEIR FORMER BONDAGE IN PAGANISM.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary then titles these remaining verses in our passage:

An appeal not to turn to legalism (4:8-11).

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says of verse 8:

Prior to conversion the Galatians, in their ignorance of the one true **God**, were in bondage to false **gods** such as Zeus and Hermes (cf. Acts 14:11-13).

Acts 14:11-13 (NASB)

And when the multitudes saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have become like men and have come down to us." And they began calling Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds.

Here Paul reviews the past, as he often does, to magnify the grace of God in their lives.

You are sons that are free now but do not forget that there was a time that **"YOU WERE ENSLAVED TO THOSE WHICH BY NATURE ARE NOT BEING GODS."**

1 Corinthians 8:5-6 (NASB)

For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we exist through Him.

1 Corinthians 10:20 (NASB)

No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons.

Colossians 2:8 (NASB)

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

Ephesians 2:12 (NASB)

remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

There was in their past a time when they were enslaved in some pagan form of idol worship.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 (NASB)

For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

At this point the formal argument for salvation by grace rather than by works is finished, but Paul seems unwilling to end the discussion without a direct and, indeed, lengthy appeal to the Galatians. He reminds his converts of their former bondage in paganism and expresses his astonishment that they could even consider a return to such slavery. In view of this possibility, he expresses concern that his labors among them may have been to no purpose.

pp. 729-30

Bartlett says:

IN VERSES 8-11 of this fourth chapter of Galatians Paul deplores the fact that the readers, after professing to have entered into the new life of fellowship with God are, at the solicitations of the Judaizers, reverting to an observance of empty forms.

p. 79

Gutzke says:

Paul is saying that he is afraid that the Galatian believers do not have the reality of living as Christians, for they are going by rules and regulations instead of going by the inward guidance of the living Lord. Here is a clear description of a person who is not a Christian: "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods" (4:8). Knowing God is far more than knowing about God. A person can know about God because he reads about Him in a book. He can know about God because he hears somebody talk about Him. *But does he know God?* He could not know Him unless he saw Him face to face, unless he actually confronted Him and had dealings with Him. This is the significance of being a Christian. A person who knows God is a person who understands and appreciates the fact that God in Christ Jesus will actually deliver him. He will put his trust in God, and he will seek to be well pleasing in His sight.

p. 94

Henry says:

I. He reminds them what they were before the gospel was preached to them. Then *they knew not God*. They were under the worst of slaveries, for *they did service to those which by nature were no gods*, and therefore were utterly unable to hear and help them. Those who are ignorant of the true God cannot but be inclined to false gods.

p. 1842

Hogg & Vine say:

Howbeit—now the Apostle turns to the Gentile element in the Galatian churches, reminding them of their state before the gospel reached them, and set them free from a bondage different from, but not less real than, that in which the Jews had been held, and appealing to them not to return thereto. “Howbeit”, lit., ‘but’, sets the two conditions, their former pagan bondage and their present Christian freedom, in strong contrast.
p. 197

Wiersbe says:

When we trust Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us; this means we are “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). The law could never give a person God’s nature within. All it could do was reveal to the person his desperate need for God’s nature. So, when the believer goes back into law, he is denying the very divine nature within, and he is giving the old nature (the flesh) opportunity to go to work.
p. 95

(Addresses by Phillips Brooks) Philadelphia, PA.: Henry Altemus. Copyright – Unknown.

A marvellous revelation that is to come to him of how all his past has been filled with the power of that spirit with which he has at last entered into communion, to which he has at last submitted himself. Man becomes the child of God, becomes the servant of Jesus Christ, and this marvellous revelation amazes him. He sees that back through all the years of his most obstinate and careless life, through all his wilfulness and resistance, through all his profligacy and black sin, God has been with him all the time, beating himself upon his life, showing him how He desired to call him to Himself, and that the final submission does not win God. It simply submits to the God who has been with the soul all the time.
pp. 70–71

My mind and thoughts go to John Newton and his wonderful hymn
“AMAZING GRACE”:

Newton’s tombstone reads, “John Newton, Clerk, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he had long labored to destroy.” But a far greater testimony outlives Newton in the most famous of the hundreds of hymns he wrote:

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
 That saved a wretch like me,
 I once was lost, but now am found,
 Was blind, but now I see.

‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
 And grace my fears relieved.
 How precious did that grace appear
 The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
 I have already come.
 ‘Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
 And grace will lead me home.

<http://www.joyfulheart.com/misc/newton.htm>

v. 9 But now having come to know God, indeed rather having become known by God. How are you turning back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments to which you are willing to be enslaved again.

The NET Bible translates verse 9:

But now that you have come to know God (or rather to be known by God), how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless basic forces? Do you want to be enslaved to them all over again?

Peterson paraphrases verse 9:

But now that you know the real God—or rather since God knows you—how can you possibly subject yourselves again to those paper tigers?

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

But a great change took place and they came to **know God** (salvation from the perspective of man), **or** to be **known by God** (salvation from God's perspective). Yet having come to know (*gnontes*, from *ginōskō*, lit., "to know intimately and on a personal level") the true God, the Galatians were **turning back**. Paul was amazed and dismayed. Did they understand that they would be going back to a state of religious slavery? Was this their desire? If so, why would they be attracted to a system that was **weak** (it could not justify or energize for godly living) **and miserable** (it could not provide an inheritance). The **principles** (*stoicheia*) of that system are "of the world," as Paul had already said in verse 3.

Paul, in verse 8, was talking about the **PAST**.

Now, in verse 9, he is talking about the **PRESENT**.

It was:

“THEN” in verse 8, and

“NOW” in verse 9.

Yes, they come to know God through Jesus Christ. Paul remembers how God longs for the fellowship of man. He created man in the beginning because He wanted someone to love and to have fellowship with, and He loves us so much that He has pursued us in that love to Calvary.

Ian Thomas expressed it beautifully when he said:

Across the rubble of a wrecked society a lonely cross has cast its shadow. The shadow of a lonely God waiting for men to be made men again.
(source unknown)

“HOW ARE YOU TURNING BACK AGAIN TO THE WEAK AND BEGGARLY RUDIMENTS TO WHICH YOU ARE WILLING TO BE ENSLAVED AGAIN?”

This is a crucial **QUESTION**. This really is the whole issue in the book of Galatians. These “fundamental things” are weak because they can only diagnose the disease, but they cannot affect a cure. They are **“BEGGARLY”** or poverty-stricken in comparison to the wealth of God’s grace.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NASB)

And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

They are **PERVERTING THE RELATIONSHIP** by introducing the law.

God wants **FELLOWSHIP** and not a **PERFORMANCE**

Hebrews 6:1-3 (NASB)

Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this we shall do, if God permits.

Philippians 3:13-14 (NASB)

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Now that you have become sons, why do you want to revert back to being slaves?

“HOW ARE YOU TURNING BACK AGAIN?”

What a question from the inspired pen of the apostle. One is reminded of:

Genesis 19:26 (NIV)

But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

(You Don't Have to Quit by Ray and Anne Ortlund) Nashville, TN: Oliver-Nelson. Copyright - Anne and Ray Ortlund, 1988.

No wonder there's this famous story about Sir Winston Churchill, who near the end of his distinguished career was asked to return to and speak at his old school, Harrow (where as a boy he'd almost flunked out).

The headmaster had been preparing the students to listen to every word because, he said, "In a few days the greatest orator of our time—perhaps of all time—will address you."

The great day finally arrived, and after the school's fanfare and acclamation Sir Winston stood to his feet, acknowledged the introduction, and gave the following address, which is quoted in full:

Young men, never give up.

Never give up!

Never give up!!

Never, never, never—never—never!

p. 96

(Tough Times Never Last, but Tough People Do! by Robert H. Schuller) New York: Bantam Books. Copyright - Robert Harold Schuller, 1983.

Don't Quit

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you are trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest, if you must—but don't you quit!

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometime learns,
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up, though the pace seems slow—
You might succeed with another blow. . . .

Success is failure turned inside out—
[T]he silver tint of the clouds of doubt—
And you can never tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems afar;
So stick to the fight when you are hardest hit—
It's when things get worse that you mustn't quit!
p. 158

Pinnock says:

Let us notice the flow of Paul's argument here. Once we were slaves (vv. 1-3); now we are God's sons (vv. 4-7); let us remember who we are and act like sons (vv. 8-11)! Quite frequently Paul makes an appeal to the mind in the interests of Christian holiness (Rom. 6:3; I Cor. 6:16). If we would but remember who we are, perhaps we would act accordingly. "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." Holy thinking leads to holy living. Let us remember that we are sons, and judge our own behavior in that light.
p. 59

Remember **WHOSE YOU ARE** and **WHO YOU REPRESENT**.

The big **QUESTION** then in this particular study is recorded here in verse 9:

“HOW ARE YOU TURNING BACK AGAIN TO THE WEAK AND BEGGARLY RUDIMENTS TO WHICH YOU ARE WILLING TO BE ENSLAVED AGAIN?”

Barclay says:

Paul calls the elementary things, the religion based on law, *weak and poverty-stricken*. (i) It is *weak* because it is helpless. It can define sin; it can show a man when he is sinning; it can convict him of sin; but it can neither find for him forgiveness for past sin nor strength to conquer future sin. The law's basic and inherent weakness always was, and is, that it can diagnose the disease but it cannot produce a cure. (ii) It is *poverty-stricken* in comparison with the splendor of grace. In its very nature the law can only deal with one situation. For every fresh situation man needs a fresh law; but the wonder of grace was that it is *poikilos*, which means *variegated, many-coloured*. That is to say, there is not a possible situation in life which grace cannot match. The law, as it were, goes stumbling from crisis to crisis; grace is sufficient for all things.

p. 39

Bickel & Jantz say:

Paul is worried. He has explained to the Galatians in every possible way that they are free in Christ. He is sure of his gospel message:

- Through faith alone in Christ alone we have a relationship with God that we would never have through works;
- We have been redeemed from the slave market of sin; and
- We are no longer obligated to follow the “weak and useless spiritual principles of this world” (4:9).

pp. 88-89

Eadie says:

... “how is it that ye are returning again to the weak and beggarly elements?” In the question begun by ... that surprising inconsistency is rebuked. Their going back is something amazing—“Who bewitched you?” After your high privilege conferred on you, your emancipation from the servitude of idols, your pure theology, yea, and your being taken into the knowledge of God, how comes it that you, so preciousy blessed, are turning, and that without any tempting bribe, or any plausible benefit—turning “to the weak and beggarly elements?”
pp. 310-11

Eadie says:

These elements are stigmatized as ...—“weak,” wholly inadequate to secure justification or provide spiritual deliverance (Rom. viii. 3); and ...—“beggarly,”—an epithet often used in its literal sense as applied to persons, and here signifying that they were endowed with no clusters of spiritual blessing, and were not fraught with “the unsearchable riches of Christ.”
p. 311

Henry says:

All our acquaintance with God begins with him; we know him, because we are known of him.
p. 1842

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

They did not first know and love God, but *God* first, in His electing love, knew and loved them as His, and therefore attracted them to the saving knowledge of Him ...
p. 1270

MacArthur says:

. . . ***known by God***. We can know God only because He first knew us, just as we choose Him only because He first chose us (John 6:44; 15:16), and we love Him only because He first loved us (1 John 4:19) . . .
p. 1670

Parker says:

The distinction is important. In the first instance taking the words “after that ye have known God,” we might be led to suppose that the Galatians had discovered God. This indeed is not a Galatian sophism only; this is the sophism that underlies a great deal of orthodox thinking. It is difficult to get away from the notion that we have discovered God. We think we have something to do with our own theology; we suppose that intellect has been out early in the morning ere the dew had gone up from the meadows, and has actually come back with the discovery of God. Nothing of the kind. “The world by wisdom knew not God.” A discovered God is an idol, a thing in which you have rights. You say there is a law of discovery upon the land, there is a law of flotsam and jetsam; there is a law of the rights of adventure:—we discovered this river and we claim it, we discovered this island and we plant our flag upon it. No man ever discovered God. The Apostle states the right sequence when he says, “or rather are known of God”: God discovered you, God found you out; the true conception of God is the conception of revelation; if you think you had anything to do with the discovery of God, then you will have all manner of tricks in words and phrases; but if you begin to feel that God first loved you, discovered you, came after you, redeemed you, then you will give glory to God.
p. 452

Ridderbos says:

The common element in what they did formerly and are now doing is that they are turning to “the rudiments” (*cf.* verse 3). These are now called *weak and beggarly* because they give no firm ground and comfort. And do they now wish to serve these all over again?
p. 161

Simpson says:

And so the law leads on to the Gospel, and the Gospel is liberty, the freedom of the Father's house, the filial spirit, the privileges of a happy child; and if we return to the law, we must set back the hands of the clock of time more than three thousand years, and go back to Sinai and the infancy and minority of the children of God.

p. 14

Wiersbe says:

The phrase *weak and beggarly elements* tells us the extent of their regression. They were giving up the power of the gospel for the weakness of law, and the wealth of the gospel for the poverty of law. The law never made anybody rich or powerful; on the contrary, the law could only reveal man's weakness and spiritual bankruptcy. No wonder Paul weeps over these believers as he sees them abandon liberty for bondage, power for weakness, and wealth for poverty.

p. 97

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House. Copyright– Oswald Chambers Publications Association, 1992.

Once we get intimate with Jesus we are never lonely and we never lack for understanding or compassion. We can continually pour out our hearts to Him without being perceived as overly emotional or pitiful. The Christian who is truly intimate with Jesus will never draw attention to himself but will only show the evidence of a life where Jesus is completely in control. This is the outcome of allowing Jesus to satisfy every area of life to its depth. The picture resulting from such a life is that of the strong, calm balance that our Lord gives to those who are intimate with Him.

(January 7)

(Grace Notes: Daily Readings with a Fellow Pilgrim by Philip Yancey) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright—Someone Cares Charitable Trust, 2009.

The last weekend of February 2007, I spoke at a historic church in Los Alamos, New Mexico. When I spoke to the community on the subject of prayer that evening, I related some of my mountain-climbing adventures. For instance, on the day my wife and I summited Mt. Wilson we were still well above the safety of timberline when dark clouds moved in. Lightning struck closer and closer. “What do we do?” I asked our experienced companion.

“There’s really not much you can do,” he replied. “The granite rock conducts electricity. I’d recommend separating by at least a hundred yards or so—that way if one of us gets hit, another can go for help. And squat down with your feet together to make yourself as small a target as possible.”

My wife and I looked at each other. Finally I shrugged and said, “Honey, we’ve had a good life. Let’s go together.” We ditched our buzzing hiking poles and squatted down, as our friend suggested, but side by side, holding hands. For the next hour we got pummeled by rain, hail, sleet, snow, and a mixture of all at once, all the while counting the seconds between each lightning bolt that sizzled around us and the blast of thunder that followed.

“I learned an important lesson,” I told the folks who had gathered in the United Church. “I am not in control. I must tell you, as a freelance writer I’m something of a control freak. I have to be. Since I have no boss telling me what to do, I have to organize my own life, and most of the time I go around feeling like I’m in control. As I learned atop Mt. Wilson, that’s an illusion.”

I went on to say that this mountain-climbing lesson actually applies all the time. “Even when I think I’m in control, I’m not. I could die of a heart attack right in front of you before finishing this sentence.” Some in the audience laughed nervously. “Or I could have an auto accident driving back to Denver tomorrow—probably far more likely than getting hit by lightning on Mt. Wilson.” More laughter. . . .

Trip notes, later included in some editions
of *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?*

p. 78

(Lectures to My Students by C. H. Spurgeon) Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust. Copyright– Unknown, 2008.

Only abstain from fighting your own battles, and in nine cases out of ten your accusers will gain nothing by their malevolence but chagrin for themselves and contempt from others. To prosecute the slanderer is very seldom wise.
p. 408

Isaiah 54:17 (NIV)

no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the Lord.

(Lectures to My Students by C. H. Spurgeon) Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust. Copyright– Unknown, 2008.

Standing as we do in a position which makes us choice targets for the devil and his allies, our best course is to defend our innocence by our silence and leave our reputation with God.
p. 408

(Green Leaf in Drought by Isobel Kuhn) Littleton, CO: Overseas Missionary Fellowship Inc. Copyright– OMF International, 1948, 1958-2007, 2010.

Andrew Murray had said, “Faith may accept; only long-suffering inherits the promise.”

Psychologically it rings true also. Again to quote Andrew Murray: “In commerce, in study, in war, it is so often said: *there is no safety but in advance* . . . To stand still is to go back. To cease effort is to lose ground. To slacken the pace, before the goal is reached, is to lose the race.”
p. 63

(In the Arena by Isobel Kuhn) Littleton, CO: Overseas Missionary Fellowship International. Copyright– OMF International, 2006.

How very important it is to obey the Lord, *step by step*! We cannot know how much may hinge on one single step. The whole course of a life might be changed by just a step.

p. 8

There are many apparently needless trials in life, but the Lord stands with us through all of them. “May you lose nothing in the furnace but your dross,” said Samuel Rutherford. The Lord will preserve everything else for us.

p. 215

(The Living Body: The Church Christ Is Building by Dr. Richard Halverson) Gresham, Oregon: Vision House. Copyright - Richard C. Halverson, 1994.

The movie The Players, directed by Robert Altman, offers a chilling portrait of a world that canonizes greed, the deal, the sure thing. The film, satirizing film-making itself, condones irresponsible wealth and power, shows contempt for unprofitable originality, and sanctifies self-interest: The bottom line is the only line. Altman implies that Hollywood is a microcosm of us all—a society marinating in its own incestuous self-interest.

p. 148

(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson) San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright– Eugene H. Peterson, 2006.

Lord Jesus, don't let my minuscule knowledge of your humanity detract from the enormous mystery of your divinity. Keep me open in faith to the majesty and glory of your being, and responsive to your power to change and save.

Amen.

p. 136

v. 10 Days you are scrupulously (religiously) observing and months and seasons and years.

The NET Bible translates verse 10:

You are observing religious days and months and seasons and years.

Peterson paraphrases verse 10:

For that is exactly what you do when you are intimidated into scrupulously observing all the traditions, taboos, and superstitions associated with special days and seasons and years.

Their calendar is revealing the evidence for what they are practicing. It is **FOUR-FOLD**. They have marked off special:

1. **"DAYS,"**
2. **"MONTHS,"**
3. **"SEASONS,"** and
4. **"YEARS"**

and these they **"ARE SCRUPULOUSLY (RELIGIOUSLY) OBSERVING."**

You get the feeling of looking at the evidence that they are into legalism big time and are totally committed to keeping of the law.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

4:10. Under the influence of the Judaizers the Galatians had at least begun to observe the Mosaic calendar. They kept **special days** (weekly sabbaths), **and months** (new moons), **and seasons** (seasonal festivals such as Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles), **and years** (sabbatical and jubilee years). (Cf. Col. 2:16.) They observed these special times, thinking that they would thereby gain additional merit before God. But Paul had already made it clear that works could not be added to faith as grounds for either justification or sanctification.

This was a manifestation of their going back under the law, back into slavery again to **rites and rules**.

This hurt the Apostle Paul deeply to see these Gentile Christians drawn away back into bondage when through the grace of God they had been set free in Jesus Christ.

Paul used to be in this, and he knew full well what they were getting into and this hurt him all the more.

Philippians 3:1-9 (NASB)

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

Colossians 2:16-17 (NASB)

Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

Hebrews 10:1-4 (NASB)

For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

There are **FOUR THINGS** involved in their **LEGAL PERFORMANCE**:

1. **"DAYS,"**
2. **"MONTHS,"**
3. **"SEASONS,"** and
4. **"YEARS"**

They are once again back under the legal observance of the calendar of the law.

Barclay says:

One of the features of Jewish law was its observance of special days and seasons. In this passage the *days* are the Sabbaths of each week; the *months* are the new moons which were special occasions; the *seasons* are the great annual feasts like the Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles; the *years* are the Sabbatic years, every seventh year, which was a special year. The failure of a religion which is dependent on special days and seasons is that almost inevitably it divides days into sacred and secular, days which belong to God and days with which men can do as they like; and the further almost inevitable step is that when a man has meticulously observed the special days he is very liable to think that he has discharged his duty to God. Although that was the religion of legalism it was very far from being the prophetic religion.

p. 40

Ridderbos says:

Inasmuch as Paul's argument is entirely directed against Judaism, the *days* presumably refer to sabbath-days, the *months* to the days of the new moon, the *seasons* to the Jewish feasts, and the *years* to the Sabbath and jubilee years. Whether the *years* were still being celebrated by the Jews in Palestine is highly uncertain. The intent of the apostle is to say that they had taken over the whole system. The summing up of them all, the cumulative heaping up, is intended to express what is quantitatively legalistic in their course of conduct. And all this they are now busy painstakingly reintroducing.
p. 162

(Turning Points: Moments of Decision in the Presence of God by David Jeremiah) Nashville, TN: Integrity. Copyright – David Jeremiah, 2005.

THE ART OF HEALTHY LIVING

Revive me according to Your Word.
PSALM 119:25

The Bible . . . is a book in which [a person] may learn from his Creator the art of healthy living,” said Swiss physician Dr. Paul Tournier.

Hymnist Fanny Crosby gave this testimony: “This Book is to me God’s treasure house. It is my bread of life, the anchor of my home, my pillar of fire by night, my pillar of cloud by day. It is the lantern that lights my pathway to my paradise home.”

Missionary Amy Carmichael wrote, “Have you noticed this? Whatever need or trouble you are in, there is always something to help you in your Bible, if only you go on reading ‘til you come to the word God specially has for you.”

Doctors tell us that many lung diseases are caused by shallow breathing. We don’t open up our lungs and deeply inhale the life-giving oxygen God has placed in our atmosphere. In the same way, many spiritual and emotional diseases are caused by shallow reading. We skim over favorite passages, but we don’t set aside the necessary time to dig deeply into God’s Word.

The Lord has given us the Bible to help us through the challenges of life. Breathe deeply of its oxygen. Feast richly on its truths. Read, study, memorize, and meditate on its verses. There you’ll find the art of healthy living.
p. 212

(The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith by Timothy Keller) New York, NY: Penguin Group. Copyright– Timothy Keller, 2008.

If the elder brother had known his own heart, he would have said, “I am just as self-centered and a grief to my father in my own way as my brother is in his. I have no right to feel superior.” Then he would have had the freedom to give his brother the same forgiveness that his father did. But elder brothers do not see themselves this way. Their anger is a prison of their own making.

p. 57

The elder brothers of the world desperately need to see themselves in this mirror. Jesus aimed this parable primarily at the Pharisees, to show them who they were and to urge them to change. As we said, the younger brother knew he was alienated from the father, but the elder brother did not. That’s why elder-brother lostness is so dangerous. Elder brothers don’t go to God and beg for healing from their condition. They see nothing wrong with their condition, and that can be fatal. If you know you are sick you may go to a doctor; if you don’t know you’re sick you won’t—you’ll just die.

p. 66

(What On Earth Have I Done?: Stories, Observations, and Affirmations by Robert Fulghum) New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press. Copyright– Robert Fulghum, 2007.

Sometimes in town I see men dressed like they think real cowboys dress. Handlebar moustache, clean-shaven, sweet-smelling. Wearing high-heeled, pointy-toed, snake-skin boots, pressed jeans, horse-hair belt with a buckle the size of a coffee-cup saucer, a green-and-black-striped silk Western shirt with pearl snaps, a fringed-and-beaded buckskin jacket, and a great big white cowboy hat. Cowboys? No. Probably interstate truck drivers or German tourists.

When I see a swarthy man with black hair wearing a black felt cowboy hat, white Western shirt, Wrangler jeans, belt with a turquoise-and-silver buckle, and black cowboy boots, I know he’s not a cowboy, either. He’s an Indian. Native American. Navajo. The conservative cowboy look is now standard dress code for Indians. Go figure.

p. 118

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon) Oswego, IL: Fox River Press. Copyright– Fox River Press, 2005.

Hang that question up in your houses, “What would Jesus do?” and then think of another, “How would Jesus do it?” for what he would do, and how he would do it, may always stand as the best guide to us. 1599.287
p. 65

NOURISHMENT FROM 4

I have many an old book in my library in which there have been book-worms, and I have sometimes amused myself with tracing a worm. I do not know how he gets to the volume originally, but being there he eats his way into it. He bores a hole in a direct line, and sometimes I find that he dies before he gets half-way through the tome. Now and then a worm has eaten his way right through from one wooden cover to another; yes, and through the cover also. This was a most successful book-worm. Few of us can eat our way quite so far. I am one of the book-worms that have not got half-way into my Bible yet; but I am eating my way as fast as I can. BA20
p. 39

Precious Book! I would say of thee what David said of Goliath’s sword, “There is none like that; give it me.” Thou art marrow and fatness, honey, wines on the lees well refined; yea, manna of angels, and water from the Rock Christ Jesus. Of all soul-medicines thou art the most potent; of all mental dainties thou art the sweetest; and of all spiritual food thou art the most sustaining. 3303.242

POWER OF 4

It is better to preach five words of God’s Word than five million words of man’s wisdom. Men’s words may seem to be the wiser and the more attractive, but there is no heavenly life in them. TN235
p. 40

(An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind by Erwin Raphael McManus) Loveland, CO: Group. Copyright– Erwin Raphael McManus, 2001.

The truth is, if churches wait too long to die to themselves, then they ensure that they will die by themselves.

p. 19

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

But Paul meant even more than this. He not only believed in Christ's death, and trusted in it, but he actually felt its power in himself in causing the crucifixion of his old corrupt nature. When he saw the pleasures of sin, he said, "I cannot enjoy these: I am dead to them." Such is the experience of every true Christian. Having received Christ, he is to this world as one who is utterly dead. Yet, while conscious of death to the world, he can, at the same time, exclaim with the apostle, "Nevertheless I live." He is fully alive unto God. The Christian's life is a matchless riddle. No worldling can comprehend it; even the believer himself cannot understand it. Dead, yet alive! crucified with Christ, and yet at the same time risen with Christ in newness of life! Union with the suffering, bleeding Saviour, and death to the world and sin, are soul-cheering things. O for more enjoyment of them!

p. 699

(If God Is Good: Faith in the Midst of Suffering and Evil by Randy Alcorn)
 Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah. Copyright– Eternal Perspective
 Ministries, 2009.

Though we naturally resist the biblical revelation about our sin
 natures, we find freedom when we recognize its reality. C. S. Lewis wrote,

It is the high-minded unbeliever, desperately trying in the teeth of
 repeated disillusion to retain his “faith in human nature” who is
 really sad . . . We actually are, at present, creatures whose character
 must be, in some respects, a horror to God, as it is, when we really see
 it, a horror to ourselves. This I believe to be a fact: and I notice that
 the holier a man is, the more fully he is aware of that fact.³

3. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York, Macmillan, 1962), 67.
 p. 64

We can successfully complete any number of physical and mental
 tasks, even some good ones. But we remain helpless sinners with nothing to
 offer God that could gain us a right standing with him. Therefore I believe
 Wayne Grudem’s term, *total inability*, is more accurate and helpful.⁴ I’ll add
 one word, calling it *total spiritual inability*. To emphasize that we have no
 ability to save ourselves may avoid the misinterpretations some have of the
 term *total depravity*.

4. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 497.
 p. 66

(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson)
 San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright– Eugene H. Peterson,
 2006.

*Father in heaven, I make many naïve promises and brave-sounding resolves.
 Much of it is sounding brass and clashing cymbals. I start out expecting your
 congratulations and end up needing your compassion. Receive me in mercy
 and forgive me for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.*
 p. 325

Take note of the **KEY WORD** in verse 10:

“OBSERVING”—which indicates a performance rather than a relationship.

v. 11 I am afraid about you lest perhaps in vain I have laboured to the point of exhaustion for you.

The NET Bible translates verse 11:

I fear for you that my work for you may have been in vain.

Peterson paraphrases verse 11:

I am afraid that all my hard work among you has gone up in a puff of smoke!

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

4:11. Reflecting concern for the Galatians, Paul expressed the **fear** that his **efforts** (*kekopiaka*, lit., “I have labored to the point of exhaustion”) would be **wasted** (*eikē*, “in vain”; cf. the same word rendered “for nothing” in 3:4, “Have you suffered so much for nothing?”) if their attachment to legalistic practices continued. The apostle’s words disclosed his strong antipathy toward legalistic religion.

Paul here feared the worst for them that they had cast aside the gospel of the free grace of God and had entered back into slavery to the law.

Galatians 1:6 (DAV)

I am marveling that so quickly you are transferring yourselves from Him who called you in the sphere of Christ’s grace unto a different gospel.

He was “MARVELING” in Galatians 1:6 about their quick transfer. Now here he is **FEARING THE WORST.**

Martin Luther feels:

These words were spoken or written in tears because of his love for the Galatian Christians. His heart becomes very tender in this portion of the epistle.

(source unknown)

Because the Apostle Paul had such deep compassion and love for those with whom he shared the gospel of the grace of God, he could say without contradiction or question that he had “labored to the point of exhaustion for them.” He had given himself to them like he did to the Philippians when he said in:

Philippians 2:17 (NASB)

But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.

It was also said that he labored night and day in his ministry to the Thessalonian saints that he might not put a burden on any of them.

Paul is fearful that their personal suffering, their discouragement and stresses have brought them to the place where spiritually they have thrown in the towel and are not going to persevere to the finish.

If such is the case, then, Paul says:

“IN VAIN I LABOURED TO THE POINT OF EXHAUSTION FOR YOU.”

One is reminded of **TERRY FOX**, the young cancer victim who endeavored to run a marathon of hope across Canada.

(Terry Fox: His Story by Leslie Scrivener)

He was invited for dinner at the Beaver Creek Correctional Camp, a minimum-security federal penitentiary where the inmates had raised \$900 in a car wash and a barbecue for his Marathon. One of the men, a long-time offender, stood spontaneously to tell Terry: "I've been through some of the toughest jails in Canada and been with some of the hardest men, but you have more guts and courage than any I ever met."

Compliments also came from the other side of the law. Ontario Provincial Police constable John Lennox of the Bala detachment was Terry's escort through cottage country. He called his assignment the proudest days of his life. "If all kids had his honesty, guts, and desire, I'd be out of a job."
p. 131

(Terry Fox: His Story by Leslie Scrivener)

"I don't care what percentages the doctor tells me I have. If God is true I know I've got 100 per cent, if that's what He has in His plans for me. And if I really believe and if God is really there, then I'm not going to lose even if I die, because it's supposed to be the Pearly Gates I'm going through, and if heaven is there, I can't lose out.

"It's something I have to have a lot of faith in, and I've got to be as strong as I can and I've got to believe it. The situation I'm in right now, I could be down, I could be depressed, I could be out of it, I could be feeling sorry for myself, all of this, but I've got to have hope.

"It's all an attitude, whatever your situation in life. I could be bitter but I can't be that way, because even if I only have two months to live I want to live those two months as best as I can, as healthy as I can, as happy as I can. I don't want to be upsetting other people by my depression. I want to help them as much as I can. I know it's hard on my parents, it's hard on my brothers. I often wonder, how is Judy doing? She goes to school, and at home her brother has a reaction and he's in bed, he's wiped out. It's probably harder on them than it is on me, because I can do something about it. I'm able to fight it and then probably don't understand as much as I do that I can do it.

"This is where we're really talking about life. Like Doug. He phoned Rika and said, 'You know, I'm praying for Terry and he doesn't seem to be getting any better. What's going on?' When I heard that, it just made me feel great because of the thought that he was doing that for me. Now we're really talking about what's keeping me going. Through my whole run I thought about the meaning of life. I thought about so many things. I realized that wealth is nothing, because I haven't got any wealth and that didn't make any difference to me. Fame? I've become famous; it hasn't changed my life, and yet you know that's what people right now spend their whole lives striving for.

"On my run, when I got emotional, it was because I was happy, it was a life-happening, like that girl [Anne Marie Von Zuben], who lost her hair three or four times in chemotherapy treatments and she was still there. She gave me a flower and, boy, that really hit me, that was a great one.

"Maybe now instead of being afraid and saying, 'Well, look how hard Terry tried and he's still got it,' people will say, 'Look at the effort he put in and he died of cancer. We're really going to have to try hard in order to beat it, try harder than we ever have before.'"

Terry Fox
November 24, 1980

pp. 185-86

(When Being Good Isn't Good Enough by Stephen Brown) Nashville:TN:
Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright - Stephen Brown, 1990.

Becoming antinomian is tragic but not totally ruinous. At least, even though heretical, an antinomian can still be in the camp, hovering near the throne. But people never stop with antinomianism because of a human process every pastor has observed: Law leads to guilt, guilt leads to struggle, struggle leads to failure, failure leads to more guilt, more guilt leads to antinomianism, antinomianism leads to apostasy, and apostasy leads to outright unbelief. Out of that unbelief flow anger and hardness of heart.
 p. 73

(Honest to God? Becoming an Authentic Christian by Bill Hybels) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Books. Copyright - Bill Hybels, 1990.

The green flag drops at the Indianapolis Speedway, and the world's most celebrated auto race begins. Gleaming, low-slung, turbocharged weapons hurtle out of the fourth turn and scream through the starting gate at two hundred miles an hour.

But give the race a little time. Driver-caused accidents, tire problems, gearbox failures, and a host of other calamities will eventually cut the field in half.

On the pace lap every car looks invincible. But it's not enough to start well. The trophies go only to those who cross the finish line.

Recent years have witnessed many people who started well but failed to end the race. In what's been called the "scandal-scarred spring" of 1987, *Time's* cover article stated:

Once again it is morning in America. But this morning Wall Street financiers are nervously scanning the papers to see if their names have been linked to insider trading scandals. Presidential candidates are peeking through drawn curtains to make sure that reporters are not staking out their private lives. A congressional witness deeply involved in the Reagan administration's secret foreign policy is huddling with his lawyers before facing inquisitors. A Washington lobbyist who once breakfasted regularly in the White House is brooding over his investigation by an independent counsel. In Quantico, Virginia, the Marines are preparing to court-martial one of their own. And in Palm Springs, California, a husband-and-wife televangelist team, once the adored cynosures of 500,000 faithful, are beginning another day in seclusion.

The article was called "What's Wrong?", and that's a question worth asking. What is wrong? Not only with our leaders, but with ourselves as well? Why do we so often start well and finish poorly? Why do we establish patterns designed to nurture authenticity, then fall back into inauthentic living?

Can we break this pattern? Can we maintain authenticity over the long haul?

I believe we can. In this chapter I want to discuss three safeguards for finishing well: discipline, accountability, and proper pacing.
pp. 177-78

Anders says:

4:1. If they continued in legalism, Paul feared that his efforts on them would have been wasted. This could mean one of two things. It could mean that the Galatians were true Christians but that Paul's efforts to spur them on to spiritual maturity in Christ were not fruitful. Or it could mean that the feared that not turning from their legalism could indicate that they were never Christians in the first place.
p. 51

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

Can his readers have missed that point? If so, it comes to them once again as the same Paul who speaks elsewhere of the fact that nothing can ever separate Christians from the redeeming love of God (Ro 8:35-39) and who expresses confidence that the work begun in the Christian by God will be continued till the day of Christ (Php 1:6) now expresses the fear that his labor in bringing the Gospel to the people of Galatia might be wasted. This is not, to be sure, the same thing as saying that a Christian can lose salvation. Indeed, even the Galatians have not gone that far; they have only begun to observe the feasts and have not yet been circumcised (5:2). Nevertheless, they are wavering, and their wavering is inexplicable and inexcusable. It can only be that they are "nearsighted and blind" and have "forgotten" that they were cleansed from old sins (see 2 Pe 1:9).
pp. 730-31

Bartlett says:

Well can we appreciate the fogs of disappointment that swept over the soul of the great apostle as he learned of this growing departure from the gospel of grace on the part of these Galatians of whom he had expected so much. His past labor among them was a fact; the fruitage therefrom was dependent upon their loyalty to the truth. He had planted the seed; it was for them to drive away the thieving crows of error, particularly the deadly legalism which the Judaizers were trying to foist upon them. Paul doubtless was fearful of the effect upon his work elsewhere of a wholesale turning from the gospel of grace on the part of the Galatian churches.
p. 82

Bickel & Jantz say:

Why Does Paul Fear For the Galatians?

In the last verse of this section, Paul writes, “I fear for you. Perhaps all my hard work with you was for nothing” (4:11). Does this mean Paul fears that the Galatians are in danger of “losing” their salvation? Though some have made a case for this view, this doesn’t seem to be what Paul is implying. For one thing, he would have been more explicit. Instead, he is simply expressing frustration that his hard work seems to mean very little to the Galatians. As you read the rest of the letter, and then compare Paul’s other writings to other churches, you will see that Paul is confident “that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns” (Philippians 1:6).

pp. 90-91

Eadie says:

It must have been a sad thought to the large-hearted apostle that his toils, anxieties, and prayers were proving themselves so far in vain. Surprised was he at the speedy revolution of sentiment, and indignant also toward the false teachers who had been seducing them. It cannot, however, be inferred from . . . that the apostle is blaming them as if the Judaizers could not have done it without their assistance.

pp. 317-18

Fergusson says:

He concludeth the former reproof, and maketh it nervous and piercing, by showing their defection was such, as if continued in, would render all the great pains and labour, which he, as a minister of Christ, did undergo amongst them, to be for no purpose and in vain, as to any good which they should reap by them; in a word, it would condemn them: and to make his reproof the more taking, he doth sweeten it somewhat, while he expresseth their hazard, not as one unconcern, and caring nothing for it, but as a tender father forecasting, and fearing what may hurt his dearest child.

p. 72

Ironside says:

“I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.” He really stood in doubt as to whether they were truly converted. He remembered how they had confessed their sins, and the joy they had, and now he says, “Was that not genuine?” One may often feel like that about people. Some make a good start and apparently seem to be real Christians, but the next thing you know they are taken up with some most unscriptural thing, and you wonder whether it was all a mistake. If people are saved, they are sealed by the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of Truth and He comes to guide them into all truth.

p. 151

Lange says:

Ver. 11. HEUBNER:—The teacher labors upon an uncertainty, knows not what he accomplishes, he sows upon hope.

p. 110

Luther says:

It grieves the Apostle to think that he might have preached the Gospel to the Galatians in vain. But this statement expresses more than grief. Behind his apparent disappointment at their failure lurks the sharp reprimand that they had forsaken Christ and that they were proving themselves to be obstinate unbelievers. But he does not openly condemn them for fear that oversharper criticism might alienate them altogether. He therefore changes the tone of his voice and speaks kindly to them.

p. 172

MacArthur says:

Paul feared that his effort in establishing and building the Galatian churches might prove to be futile if they fell back into legalism . . .

p. 1670

McGee says:

Paul is saying, in a nice way, that he thinks he has wasted his time among them. Since they have been saved by grace, their returning to the Law is the same as returning to their former idolatry. He reminded them that they had not known God by means of the Mosaic Law but by faith in Jesus Christ.
pp. 178-9

Patrick & Lowth say:

. . . *I am afraid of you.*] As well he might; for by this practice they must revolt again from Christ to the Jewish synagogues: for it belonged only to their great Sanhedrin, or to the doctors of the law, to state the certain times of their new moons and other festivals; so that the due observation of them they must entirely depend upon the Jewish Sanhedrin.
p. 736

Pinnock says:

Let us notice the flow of Paul's argument here. Once we were slaves (vv. 1-3); now we are God's sons (vv. 4-7); let us remember who we are and act like sons (vv. 8-11)! Quite frequently Paul makes an appeal to the mind in the interests of Christian holiness (Rom. 6:3; I Cor. 6:16). If we would but remember who we are, perhaps we would act accordingly. "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." Holy thinking leads to holy living. Let us remember that we are sons, and judge our own behavior in that light.
p. 59

Vos says:

"I am afraid of you" (v. 11), not because of personal fear but because Paul was apprehensive concerning the effect of their action on his work. If they continued in this legalistic pattern of life, all his efforts on their behalf would have gone for nothing, would be without any continuing and meaningful result.
p. 77

Wuest says:

I am afraid about you lest perhaps in vain I have labored to the point of exhaustion for you.
p. 206

A GNAT LESSON

During one of my daily walks, I inadvertently walked through a small tornado of little insects. I didn't think much of it at the time, but later on I found all kinds of bites on my ankles and arms. It seems I had walked through a swarm of gnats, whose bites led to uncomfortable itching and sores.

This experience gave me a new perspective on the plague of gnats that God visited upon Egypt when Pharaoh would not free the Israelites. The Hebrew word translated "lice" in Exodus 8:16-18 can also mean "gnats" or "mosquitoes." Because the insects are compared to the sand of the desert, a swarm of gnats seems the most likely. The pagan priests of Pharaoh who prided themselves in their frequent washings and shavings were now covered with numerous insect bites. God had designed this plague to get Pharaoh to repent and let Israel go, but instead he hardened his heart.

Is God trying to get your attention through some circumstances in your life? Is He trying to persuade you to get back in step with Him? (Gal. 5:25). We should resist the urge to harden our hearts. But let's instead submit to God (James 4:6-8) and ask Him what spiritual lessons He wants us to learn.

*The sun that hardens clay to brick
Can soften wax to shape and mold;
So too life's trials will harden some,
While others purify as gold. —Sper*

**God makes us miserable through conviction to make us joyful
through confession.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Sunday, August 8, 2010)

(The Best of A. W. Tozer by A. W. Tozer, compiled by Warren W. Wiersbe)
Camp Hill, PA: Wing Spread Publishers. Copyright– Zur Ltd., 1978,
2000.

The best way to control our thoughts is to offer the mind to God in complete surrender. The Holy Spirit will accept it and take control of it immediately. Then it will be relatively easy to think on spiritual things, especially if we train our thought by long periods of daily prayer. Long practice in the art of mental prayer (that is, talking to God inwardly as we work or travel) will help to form the habit of holy thought.

p. 45

(Finish Strong: Amazing Stories of Courage and Inspiration by Dan Green)
Naperville, IL: Simple Truths, LLC. Copyright– Simple Truths, LLC,
2008.

“Have the dogged
determination to follow
through to achieve your
goal: Regardless of
circumstances or
whatever other people
say, think or do.”

— PAUL J. MEYER

p. 83

(The Mentor Leader: Secrets to Building People and Teams that Win Consistently by Tony Dungy with Nathan Whitaker) Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House. Copyright– Tony Dungy, 2010.

You see, the question that burns in the heart of the mentor leader is simply this: *What can I do to make other people better, to make them all that God created them to be?*

p. 5

So, when it comes to effective leadership, it's not about you and what makes you comfortable or helps you get ahead.

It's about other people. It's about serving God by serving others.

That's the mind-set of the mentor leader.

p. 22

(Green Leaf in Drought by Isobel Kuhn) Littleton, CO: Overseas Missionary Fellowship Inc. Copyright– OMF International, 1948, 1958-2007, 2010.

It seemed to come like an answer: "It is not the storm that worries the Lord. It is the *unbelief of the disciples*."

p. 48

(Lectures to My Students by C. H. Spurgeon) Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust. Copyright– Unknown, 2008.

Life is short, and time is precious to a busy man. Whatever we do, we wish to make the most of.

p. 429

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI:
Discovery House. Copyright– Oswald Chambers Publications
Association, 1992.

Anything that disturbs our rest in Him must be rectified at once, and it is not rectified by being ignored but only by coming to Jesus Christ. If we will come to Him, asking Him to produce Christ-awareness in us, He will always do it, until we fully learn to abide in Him.

Never allow anything that divides or destroys the oneness of your life with Christ to remain in your life without facing it. Beware of allowing the influence of your friends or your circumstances to divide your life. This only serves to sap your strength and slow your spiritual growth. Beware of anything that can split your oneness with Him, causing you to see yourself as separate from Him. Nothing is as important as staying right spiritually. And the only solution is a very simple one—“Come to Me . . .” The intellectual, moral, and spiritual depth of our reality as a person is tested and measured by these words. Yet in every detail of our lives where we are found not to be real, we would rather dispute the findings than come to Jesus. (August 19)

(The Love Dare by Stephen & Alex Kendrick with Lawrence Kimbrough)
Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group. Copyright– Stephen & Alex
Kendrick, 2008.

**DEMONSTRATE LOVE BY WILLINGLY CHOOSING
TO GIVE IN TO AN AREA OF DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN
YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE. TELL THEM YOU
ARE PUTTING THEIR PREFERENCE FIRST.**

p. 59

(Green Leaf in Drought by Isobel Kuhn) Littleton, CO: Overseas Missionary Fellowship Inc. Copyright– OMF International, 1948, 1958-2007, 2010.

When unjust and unfair treatment aroused the natural heat of resentment, came this from Alexander MacLaren: “Meek endurance and meek obedience, the accepting of His dealing, of whatever complexion they are and however they may tear and desolate our hearts, without murmuring, without sulking, without rebellion or resistance, is the deepest conception of the meekness which Christ pronounced blessed.” And, “The meaning of all that God does with us—joys and sorrows, light and darkness . . . is that our wills may be made plastic and flexible.”

p. 37

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: We become sons and daughters at salvation.

LESSON #2: As sons and daughters, we are part of God's family.

LESSON #3: God sent forth His Son and the Spirit to guide us into all truth.

LESSON #4: The inheritance is for the family.

LESSON #5: God's timing is always perfect. "He has made everything beautiful in its time . . ." (Ecc. 3:11 NIV).

LESSON #6: The cry of relationship is "Abba! Father!"

LESSON #7: The Holy Spirit restrains us from evil.

LESSON #8: We come from a slave to a son by the Savior through the Spirit.

LESSON #9: The two-fold purpose of the Son's coming into the world is:
(1) "in order that he might deliver out by the payment of a ransom those under law" and (2) "in order that we might receive the adoption" (verse 5).

LESSON #10: How careful we must be to focus and concentrate upon an ever deepening relationship with Jesus Christ rather than performing for Him.

LESSON #11: May God's Spirit motivate us to press on in perseverance to the finish line.

“You were running well UNTIL: You Didn’t Graduate.”

Here the Apostle Paul wants these dear young believers in Christ to recognize their position as sons rather than slaves. Growing out of this new relationship as sons of God, they are also heirs and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

Near so very near to God,
Nearer I could be,
For in the Person of His Son,
I am just as near as He.

Dear, so very dear to God,
Dearer I could not be,
For in the Person of His Son,
I am just as near as He.

The Apostle Paul is calling them:

to a **REMEMBRANCE** of whose they are,

who they **REPRESENT**, and

that they need to **RECOGNIZE** that as His sons, their lives ought to reflect the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I will always remember a note that my son Bobby gave me when he was in high school:

I’ve always had trouble.
I’ve always had fun.
But I’m always glad
That I’m your son.

The choice really is ours. We can:

RESIST or

RECEIVE.

Lucado says:

Father, what a privilege to be your child through faith in Christ. Help me to remember today that I am a member of the ultimate royal family; and give me the wisdom and strength to live up to my pedigree.

p. 69

(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson)

San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright– Eugene H. Peterson, 2006.

You know, Lord, how faithless and nervous I am in the presence of illness and death: even though I know you are the great Physician; even though I know you are the resurrection and the life. Teach me to live in hope, responsive every moment to your glory. Amen.

p. 304

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts:
Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

We know that the world and all that is therein is one day to be burnt up, and afterwards we look for new heavens and for a new earth; but we cannot read our Bibles without the conviction that—

“Jesus shall reign where’er the sun
Does his successive journeys run.”

We are not discouraged by the length of His delays; we are not disheartened by the long period which He allots to the church in which to struggle with little success and much defeat. We believe that God will never suffer this world, which has once seen Christ’s blood shed upon it, to be always the devil’s stronghold. Christ came hither to deliver this world from the detested sway of the powers of darkness. What a shout shall that be when men and angels shall unite to cry, “Hallelujah, hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!” What a satisfaction will it be in that day to have had a share in the fight, to have helped to break the arrows of the bow, and to have aided in winning the victory for our Lord! Happy are they who trust themselves with this conquering Lord, and who fight side by side with Him, doing their little in His name and by His strength! How unhappy are those on the side of evil! It is a losing side, and it is a matter wherein to lose is to lose and to be lost for ever. On whose side are you?
p. 719

(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson)
San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright– Eugene H. Peterson,
2006.

I commit myself and those I live with into your safekeeping, dear Father. Permit no evil to ruin our faith, no testing to damage our obedience, no unbelief to diminish our love, no anxieties to weaken our hope. You bought us with a great price; now keep us for eternity. Amen.
p. 301

I want a better understanding of your will for me, Lord; I want more light on your ways in my life. Direct me into the acts of obedience and the affirmations of faith that will show me what you are doing, in Jesus Christ. Amen.
p. 275